

Greycliffe

❧ **Stolen Lives** ❧

Steve Brew

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*For a man who I have always respected and admired;
A man who has always encouraged me and believed in me -
A man whom I am proud to call my father*

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❧ Preface ❧

AT the time of writing, the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* Disaster of 3 November 1927 remains the deadliest shipping accident ever to have occurred on Sydney Harbour. Whilst losses were minimal in comparison to some of the more infamous maritime disasters in history, the tragedy shocked Sydneysiders for its swiftness and horror. There was no storm and no swell. Visibility was clear and it was a fine, sunny afternoon.

One often has the impression terrible accidents always happen somewhere else and to someone else, but this time a tragedy occurred in our own city. The *Sydney Morning Herald* captured exactly this emotion:

As the city goes tranquilly about its business from year to year, there bursts upon it now and then the announcement of some dreadful accident, some tragedy involving heavy loss of life; and then people look at one another and realise what an uncertain business life is at the best. But surely never in Sydney's history has anything happened to bring such an immediate sense of horror as the collision on the harbour...between the Greycliffe and the Tahiti.

The earthquake in Japan, although it caught thousands upon thousands in its maw, seemed far remote from the eddies of life in Pitt-street and King-street. The Aberdeen railway smash, terrible in the toll of death and suffering it exacted, was still some distance from the city itself. One was unspeakably distressed then; but yet one felt that in long-distance travelling there must always be a slight element of risk.

But for the people proceeding quietly from their work to their homes in broad daylight to be thus swept into danger and death seemed unbelievable. The thought weighed upon the city all day... like a pall. The usual frigid barriers that divide one man reading his newspaper in the tram from another man similarly engaged melted away. People talked the event over gloomily with one another.¹

With few seconds warning, the Royal Mail Steamer *Tahiti* sliced through the wooden Watsons Bay ferry, *Greycliffe*, off Bradleys Head, killing 40 people and injuring dozens more. It was so unexpected and so sudden that no-one had a chance to don a life jacket.

This is the true story behind the accident and the people involved: those who survived and those who did not. This is the story of the cost in human lives, and the sadness in the aftermath, of the trials and attempts to claim compensation.

In this book I have sought to document the events leading up to, during and in particular after the collision between the two vessels on that fateful day in 1927. I have placed an especially strong emphasis on the human side of the tragedy by identifying the individuals involved, rather than merely presenting facts and figures.

Motivated by my interest in genealogy and knowing the importance to the researcher of finding biographical information and indexed data, I have attempted to tell the story with as much detail on individuals as possible.

Mentions of people in the text are based on actual occurrences. I have drawn on statements made by eyewitnesses, reports made by or to the media, and testimony given in the ensuing court cases. I have sought to corroborate stories, find fact in rumour, separate truth from myth, and specifically to correct contradictions between

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

different sources. I have gone into greater detail than any previous writer on this subject, and have sought to present a definitive account of this sad piece of Sydney history.

Additionally, I have included several appendices containing short biographies of the victims, passengers, crews, and witnesses. Therefore, more than just a documentation of the tragedy, I hope this book will be a useful tool for family historians. It is specifically for this reason I have included both a bibliography and suggested further reading for anyone wishing to extend their own research on a particular individual or in a specific part of the enquiries. The coronial documents mentioned in the appendices will also be of great interest for the biographical information they provide.

Despite the fact the tragedy occurred some 75 years ago, I do not wish to cause any distress to the families and descendants of anyone involved. Out of respect for their privacy, unless condoned, I have not knowingly identified any link to living persons.

My own interest in the fate of *Greycliffe* and her passengers was inspired by one of the key figures in this sad episode in Sydney's history, *Tahiti's* Pilot, Captain Thomas Carson, who was my great granduncle. His brother-in-law, my great grandfather Captain Albert Brew, was, like Carson, also a harbour pilot in Newcastle, NSW. The two men worked together in that port for several years on the pilot steamer S.S. *Ajax* before Carson's move back to Sydney with the pilot service in 1923. Ironically, the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* collision led to Albert Brew being brought to Sydney to replace him, instead of to join him.

I hope the reader will find this book an interesting, if not sobering, account of the worst maritime accident ever to have occurred inside Sydney Heads.

Steve Brew

September 2003

The eastern side of Circular Quay, looking towards the Rocks and present site of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.
© City of Sydney Archives

Ferries entering and leaving Circular Quay. On the far left is Fort Macquarie Tram Depot.
© City of Sydney Archives

Circular Quay, Sydney, 1930. No.1 wharf, the first jetty from the left, was home to Sydney Ferries' Watsons Bay service. For many years, this was where *Greycliffe* embarked and disembarked her passengers.
© Graeme Andrews Collection

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

Greycliffe under way in Sydney Harbour. Typical of the Sydney ferries of her day, she was a wooden, doubled-ended vessel with a wheelhouse, rudder and propeller at each end. Running through her two decks, between her forward and after saloons, a tall black funnel reached 33 feet above the waterline, sixteen feet of which extended above the roof of the upper deck cabin.

© Graeme Andrews Collection

Greycliffe alongside the wharf at Watsons Bay, ca. 1915.

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❧ The School Boat ❧

AT the ring of the ferry's bell, *Greycliffe's* Fireman, Alfred Dean, and Deckhand, Frederick Jones, simultaneously hauled in the vessel's fore and aft gangways at the No.1 Jetty of Sydney's Circular Quay. As the thick mooring lines were let go, the Quay was jostling with commuters, each going their separate ways home.

This was the regular 4.14 p.m. run from Circular Quay to Watsons Bay, the northern-most suburb of Sydney's leafy Inner South Head. Nicknamed 'The School Boat', this particular trip had earned its name for the city school children the ferry brought home each afternoon. The next stop was the ferry wharf at Garden Island seven minutes later to pick up Navy Dockyard workers.

Captain William Barnes blew *Greycliffe's* whistle, aware he was already a minute behind schedule. The 16-year-old ferry spewed a large plume of black smoke as she pulled away from the Quay. Her engine thumped rhythmically as she gradually built up speed and headed out towards Bennelong Point.

Typical of the Sydney ferries of her day, *Greycliffe* was a wooden, doubled-ended vessel with a wheelhouse, rudder and propeller fitted at each end. Weathered white bulwarks ran the length of the 125-foot vessel at deck level, encircling varnished wooden outdoor seats. These in turn surrounded segregated men's and women's saloons; the men's forward of the engine room and the women's aft.

Above them lay an upper deck, where, like the main deck, both inside and outside seating was provided. At each end of this deck stood the wheelhouses, identical in every detail, except for the ferry's bell which was mounted on the port side of one.

Running up through both decks, between the forward and after saloons, was a single tall black funnel, reaching 33 feet above the waterline. Sixteen feet of funnel extended above the roof of the upper deck cabin, towering over flagstaffs mounted at each end. Not quite as high, but reaching higher than the roof of the upper deck, two further flagstaffs, one in each bow, proudly boasted the Sydney Ferries flag.

In just three minutes, *Greycliffe* rounded Bennelong Point with its prominent tram depot, Fort Macquarie¹. The skipper straightened her up, and put her nose on a direct heading for the navy base at Garden Island. This was her accustomed route. Specifically built for the Watsons Bay service, *Greycliffe* ran the distance between Circular Quay and Watsons Bay several times each day.

The ferry was not the only means of transport for the people living on the foreshores of Vaucluse and Watsons Bay. There was also a tram, but it was, for many, a long walk up the hill to Old South Head Road. The ferry was certainly the easier option, and over the years many passengers had come to know each other personally. The route had an almost club atmosphere about it and all the regular passengers had their accustomed seats.

Greycliffe soon slipped by Mrs Macquarie's Chair on her starboard side, then Fort Denison to port. It was a beautiful afternoon on the harbour. It was clear and sunny, and, although the westerly breeze was too light to pick up a chop, it was fresh enough to keep the temperature at a comfortable 71°F. Behind the ferry, in the distance now,

the new harbour bridge was under construction; ahead of her, the crowded ferry wharf at Garden Island steadily drew closer.

Moments later, *Greycliffe's* propeller churned up the water as it fought against her forward motion to slow her arrival at the dockyard pontoon. As she made fast, the gangways were run out again to greet the sea of brown suits and white uniforms. At this time of day, the wharf was always overflowing with Dockyard workers awaiting ferries to take them home to different parts of the harbour after their day's work. 'Island Police' oversaw the throng, which briefly thinned out when a number of men boarded.

Within minutes, the ferry was underway again. As her stern cleared the wharf, Captain Barnes glanced over his shoulder through the wheelhouse's rear port window and over the roof of the upper deck cabin. Seeing nothing, he turned the wheel two points to port and increased speed.

At 52, Barnes had been plying the harbour some 30 years and knew Port Jackson well. Although he had skippered *Greycliffe* on and off for ten years, he was not her usual Master; he only took the helm on Wednesdays and Thursdays when the regular Master took his days off. Today was such a day. Barnes adjusted his course again and steered for the navigation light 100 yards north of Shark Island.

As *Greycliffe* picked up speed, Alfred Dean walked down the vessel's port side and glanced out over the harbour. The 37-year-old, known to his mates as 'Nipper', had worked the harbour on *Greycliffe* since she came into service in 1911. He lived in Watsons Bay and knew all the regular passengers; although they were on their way home, he was little more than three hours into his shift.

He idly watched some school children talking and laughing together. The Public Schools' Amateur Athletic Association meeting at the Sydney Cricket Ground meant there were less children on the ferry today, so it was an unusually quiet run. He revelled in the rare opportunity to take a short break and watch the yachts leaning to the breeze and skipping over the water.

Nearby, some older men were quietly reading their newspapers and up towards the bow sat a group of workers arguing jovially over the previous day's Melbourne Cup win by 'Trivalve'. A young couple and their daughter climbed the stairs to the upper deck. There, a dozen white life rings adorned the maroon railings, three on each side and at each end. A number of rafts were stowed in the bow, complemented by a single lifeboat at one end.

Thanks to the efforts of engineer 'Jack' Barrett, the steam pressure was up and before long they were making a good nine knots. It would be a little while yet before they would reach Nielsen Park, so Dean still had a few minutes to spare before he had to run out the gangways again. He went back inside and over to the engine room where he casually leant on a railing, chatting with Barrett.

Up in the forward wheelhouse, Captain Barnes stood at the wheel. Measuring six feet in diameter, it dipped below an 18-inch-high platform upon which he stood. The small cabin afforded little space to move, measuring just seven feet wide by six feet high. Between the wheel and the rear wall, Barnes stood in a space just two feet deep. He was surrounded by windows, the only exit being behind him, through the upper deck cabin. He realised his course had altered slightly to port and, putting it down to the 'fall of the rudder'², straightened her up again. Ahead of him, he could see the ferry *Woollahra* coming towards him from Nielsen Park on the return leg of the same

❧ The School Boat ❧

route. Around Bradleys Head, a tug was also coming in his direction, towing a small barge.

Inside the smoky Men's Saloon, Fred Jones, known to many of the passengers as 'Curly', was busy collecting fares. Navy Officers and businessmen chatted together sharing the day's events, or read a newspaper while enjoying a pipe or cigarette.

Jones looked up momentarily and glanced out the saloon's port-side windows. He caught his breath. His attention was instantly captured by a large ship, barely 100 yards away, heading straight towards them.³ Judging by her large creaming bow wave, she was moving at a considerable speed. Immediately recognising the danger, he ordered the startled men around him to get out, then ran for his two mates in the engine room.

He raced through the saloon and shouted to Dean, 'For Christ's sake Nipper, she's going to hit!'⁴ Then he turned and ran forward to warn others.

Startled by this unexpected interjection, Dean hurried over to the ferry's port side and could not believe his eyes. He was horrified to see a passenger liner over three times the ferry's length, almost upon them. Her sharp steel bow was already abreast of *Greycliffe's* funnel, and barely three or four feet from of the aft gangway.⁵ Turning to escape the inevitable, he saw three schoolgirls nearby. He cried out to them, 'For goodness sake, run!'⁶

An aerial view of Garden Island in the 1920s. The ferry wharf, where many of *Greycliffe's* passengers boarded her, is located at bottom right. © Graeme Andrews Collection

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Measuring almost 7600 tons, *Tahiti's* 460-foot olive-green hull stood in stark contrast to her shining white above-deck cabins. The vessel afforded accommodation for over 500 passengers in three classes, and was three times the length of *Greycliffe*.

© Jonothan Davis Collection

Aerial view of the finger wharves and passenger terminals in Darling Harbour.

© City of Sydney Archives

❧ *The Mail Steamer* ❧

BEARING over 300 passengers and crew bound for New Zealand and the United States, the Union Steamship Company's graceful passenger liner, R.M.S. *Tahiti*, lay alongside Darling Harbour's No. 5 Wharf. As the crew scurried about, making final preparations for departure, newly embarked passengers made for the outside decks to wave their farewells. Below them, a valuable consignment of mail and cargo filled the holds whilst, over their heads, a gentle waft of smoke rose aimlessly from the ship's funnel, and was carried away in the light breeze.

She was an impressive-looking vessel. Measuring almost 7600 tons, her 460-foot olive-green hull stood in stark contrast to her shining white above-deck cabins. A neat row of covered lifeboats hung from davits along the length of the upper-most deck on each side, and a single, plump red funnel with a black top stood above them, amongst a clutter of ventilators.

At both ends of the vessel stood buff-coloured masts, supported by a complicated system of rigging, each almost a work of art in itself. They were surrounded by derricks which serviced her generous below-deck cargo holds, whilst a small crow's-nest, perched about a third of the way up her foremast, afforded a bird's eye view of the busy scene below. The Australian flag fluttered lazily in the gentle wind atop her foremast, whilst the Union Steamship Company flag adorned the mainmast. A signal flag was raised on the fore yard arm to indicate the Harbour Pilot had boarded.

Union Steamship's Sydney Manager, Charles Hughes, oversaw *Tahiti's* departure that afternoon. He was irritated because the vessel was unexpectedly delayed by one of the gangways being stuck at its shipboard end. It took half-a-dozen men several minutes to release the wheeled ramp before the vessel could finally cast off its lines and get underway. A delay was embarrassing at the best of times, but today it was even more so; the Company's Managing Director, Sir Charles Holdsworth, was visiting from New Zealand and was present for the departure.

In fact, this was not the first incident that afternoon. Earlier, a woman in the crowd farewelling friends and relatives on the liner had fallen from the wharf into the water. She was rescued by a man who dived in after her, and was brought ashore by a motor launch.

No doubt, Hughes thought there had been quite enough trouble for one departure—especially with the Managing Director present—but it would not end there. It is a widely accepted adage that bad things come in threes, but never in Hughes' worst nightmare could he have imagined what would yet transpire before *Tahiti* cleared Sydney Heads that day.

On the ship's bridge, Captain Basil Aldwell casually chatted with the pilot assigned to the vessel that afternoon, Captain Thomas Carson. The two Captains had known one other for some ten years and had an amicable respect for each other. They shared the bridge with the helmsman, Quartermaster Roderick McLeod, and with the Third Officer, Harold Litchfield, who was stationed by the engine-room telegraphs.

A charming Scotsman of personable nature, Carson was in his late forties and beginning to grey. Although some nine years Aldwell's junior, the Master Mariner had almost twenty years experience as a Pilot and was previously at sea, having

circumnavigated the globe under both sail and steam. His career with the Pilot Service began in Sydney, but he subsequently spent several years piloting in Newcastle. He returned to Sydney in 1923, and had been stationed at Watsons Bay ever since.

Aldwell was a Union Steamship man who had spent almost his entire career with the Company. A Master Mariner with over 30 years experience at sea, the 57-year-old Englishman was by no means new to *Tahiti*. He first captained her in 1919 and, having been her permanent master since 1922, he felt quite at home on her bridge.

At eight bells, First Officer Cecil Sharpe of Wellington, New Zealand, positioned himself in the forecastle and awaited the order to let the lines go. Compatriot and Dunedin boy, Second Officer Frank Gibson, in the stern, did the same.

When the captain saw the gangway had been lifted clear, he gave the order to let the aft lines go, followed by those forward. As the lines fell free, the wharfies below hauled them in. Several minutes behind schedule, a tug pulled *Tahiti* stern-first from her berth and turned her bow northwards. Now clear of the wharf, Pilot Carson took command and directed the helmsman. He ordered 'slow ahead' and the message was relayed through the telegraphs to the engine-room many feet below them.

Under the watchful eye of Carson, the ship gathered momentum and headed out into the stream. McLeod held the wheel firmly in two hands as he gently coaxed the steamer past Goat Island and turned east, sliding smoothly between the construction sites for the new harbour bridge.

On both sides of the narrow channel, sweaty men struggled with massive granite blocks as they laid the bridge's foundations. Quarried at 'Granitetown', near Moruya on New South Wales' south coast, each slab had been transported to Sydney by steamship. A jumble of cranes towered above them, whilst eager eyes followed their progress from the myriad of watercraft which passed by.

As the liner passed Circular Quay, Carson ordered the engines to be put to 'half ahead' and routinely sounded the horn as a warning to other harbour traffic. He ordered 'full ahead' as they passed Bennelong Point, and the ship began to increase speed as they swept past Fort Denison and approached Garden Island.

She made a proud picture as she moved down the Harbour in the afternoon sunshine. Built in Glasgow in 1904, the 23-year-old steamer originally wore the name *Port Kingston* on her stern. When acquired by the Union Steamship Company in 1911, she was renamed *Tahiti* and put into the trans-Pacific passenger and mail service. Her career was interrupted during World War I when she served the Commonwealth as a troopship. Most of her luxurious furnishings were removed for the purpose, but she was returned to her original glory in the months after the War and resumed her former role in the Pacific early in 1920.

Although the vessel afforded accommodation for over 500 passengers in three classes, as she moved down Sydney Harbour that afternoon she carried less than half that number. Out on deck, first class passengers lined the rails alongside second and third class passengers as they savoured a last long look at the city.

Only a relatively short distance away, just outside Sydney Heads, Carson's duty to oversee *Tahiti's* navigation down the harbour would be done. There, as was the procedure, Carson would hand over command to the Captain, transfer to the pilot steamer *Captain Cook* and return to the Pilot Station at Watsons Bay.

❧ The Mail Steamer ❧

Although not a picture of *Greycliffe*, this image illustrates the typical interior of a Sydney ferry's men's saloon from the period. Note the sign on the ceiling, "PLEASE DO NOT SPIT".
© Harold Cazneaux 1878-1953, *Please do not spit*, 1906, from a glass plate negative, Harold Cazneaux photograph collection, National Library of Australia PIC HC 143/9, nla.pic-an23242810

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

Parsley Bay was home to many of *Greycliffe*'s passengers. As a result of dwindling numbers of ferry passengers, partially a result of the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* disaster, Parsley Bay wharf was closed in 1933 and has, to this day, not been re-opened to ferry traffic.

© Graeme Andrews Collection

Although not a photo of *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe*, this picture, looking east down Sydney Harbour, shows their paths to Bradleys Head. The ferries on the stern port and starboard sides of the liner in the photo have just rounded the Fort Macquarie Tram Depot on Bennelong Point. Ahead of them lies Garden Island, whilst off the liner's port bow is Fort Denison. Further east of Fort Denison is Shark Island and, north of her, are Steel Point and Bradleys Head respectively.

© Graeme Andrews Collection

❧ The Mail Steamer ❧

For Captain Aldwell, this was the point where the voyage began. Beyond the Port Jackson lay his distant ports of call – Wellington, Rarotonga, Papeete, and finally San Francisco.

Second Officer Gibson was busy in the stern supervising the stowing of the mooring lines, and lowering the New Zealand flag from the ensign staff. Whilst First Officer Sharpe secured the foc'sle in preparation for the voyage ahead, Third Officer Litchfield left the bridge to go to the chartroom on the deck below.

Aldwell and Carson surveyed the familiar scene around them while they chatted with each other. Both lived in Sydney and knew the harbour well. They noted the Watsons Bay-bound ferry, *Greycliffe*, which had just departed Garden Island, running down the harbour ahead of them, a few points off their starboard bow.

Department of Navigation regulations stipulated the course they must take down the harbour. Carson knew this meant his path would cross *Greycliffe's* before long but he felt confident the ferry was aware of his presence. He directed the helmsman to steer for the north end of Shark Island.

A little ahead of them, on their port side, the Circular Quay-bound ferry, *Woollahra*, approached from the opposite direction. In moments, she would pass the liner down her port side. Carson kept a close eye on the two ferries, steering a more-or-less parallel course to take *Tahiti* between them.

To their rear, another ferry followed. Manly-bound *Burra-Bra* had left Circular Quay a few minutes after *Tahiti* swept past. Still picking up speed, the ferry was belching thick black smoke as she worked up to nine knots.

Rolling through *Tahiti's* wake, slightly to her port side, *Burra-Bra's* helmsman, Rupert Nixon, saw *Woollahra* coming directly for him. He ported his helm and moved to starboard, out of her way. Now squarely astern of *Tahiti*, and almost abreast of Fort Denison, he saw *Greycliffe* ahead, off the liner's starboard bow.

Second Officer Gibson came onto *Tahiti's* bridge as the vessel passed Garden Island, having returned to his cabin to change his coat for the evening ahead. He stepped inside just as Carson cried out in alarm, 'Good God! She's closing in on us!'¹ Gibson swung around to see *Greycliffe* steering a course which would surely bring her into collision with the liner.

Aldwell raced to the starboard wing of the bridge and froze. There was little he could do but watch, whilst Carson barked orders. 'Stop Port!' he shouted, 'Stop Starboard!' His eyes glued to the ferry, Carson ordered 'Full Astern Both Engines!'

It had little immediate effect. At the speed the liner was doing, she would run several hundred feet before she would begin to turn away, let alone stop. Carson seized the lanyard to the funnel's steam horn and pulled on it hard, twice.

Astern of them, aboard *Burra-Bra*, Nixon watched just as helplessly as Aldwell. *Greycliffe* kept on her course, apparently unaware of *Tahiti's* presence. He watched as the gap between the two vessels quickly diminished; *Greycliffe* raced in to meet *Tahiti's* bow, like a magnet drawn to steel.

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

The ferry S.S. *Kurraba* was one of several that turned back to assist with the rescue efforts after the collision. *Kurraba*'s 'claim to fame' in the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* story is that she rescued *Greycliffe*'s exhausted master, William Barnes, from the water. In this photo, *Kurraba* is alongside at Milsons Point wharf. © Graeme Andrews Collection

The Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook (2)* was at anchor in Watsons Bay at the time of the collision. Her Second Engineer, who was sitting on her rear deck, saw *Tahiti* collide with *Greycliffe* and raised the alarm. *Cook* hurried over to assist with the rescue and brought many survivors ashore at Parsley Bay. © Graeme Andrews Collection

❧ *The Collision* ❧

ABOARD *Greycliffe*, most passengers were oblivious to the impending disaster.

Leila Scott, a private nurse enjoying a free afternoon, sat outside, quietly reading a letter from her fiancé. School friends Nancy Lewis, Dora Hill and Doris Garrett sat nearby chatting whilst teenagers Ken Horler, Leslie Brook, Lennie Lankshear and Ken Berliner sat side by side in the stern, looking to the rear.¹ Not far from them, dockyard worker Stan Whalley quietly enjoyed the afternoon trip. The Englishman and veteran of the Great War watched the naval launches around 'The Island' going about their business. Close by stood thirty-one-year-old salesman George Hilliard. He looked out over the harbour, and watched the little sail boats skimming across the waves.

Inside the men's saloon, the regulars sat in their accustomed seats. Amongst them was a trio of doctors, who always shared the trip home together. One of these was Doctor Robert Lee-Brown, a medical officer at Sydney's Long Bay Gaol, who had his own private practice in the city. With his spectacles perched on his nose, he rolled a cigarette and lit up. With him sat his good friend, Edinburgh-educated Doctor Charles Reid, New South Wales' Chief Quarantine Officer. At 6½ feet tall, the 37-year-old, who had to stoop to enter the smoking saloon, made a striking figure. Completing the threesome was Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander William Paradice, who had boarded the ferry at Garden Island, where he was Senior Medical Officer. The young doctor, who was yet to reach thirty, was also Medical Officer in Charge of the naval wing of Prince of Wales Hospital in Randwick.

Nearby, quietly reading his paper, sat James Treadgold, a retired Council Alderman and not once, but six-times Mayor of Leichhardt. A gold fob watch was tucked neatly into his vest pocket, from which a gold chain led to a button hidden inside his jacket. William Jones, a plumpish man with a neatly clipped moustache and closely-cropped grey hair also sat in the cabin. He wore grey braces over his white shirt. To complement them, a black knitted tie, possibly a gift, was held in place by his blue and white striped collar. They were an odd match with his tweed trousers and tan shoes.

Above them, sitting outside on the upper deck, was a young family from the country. Thirty-one-year-old John Corby, a railway fitter, and his wife Mary, took in the scenery around them with their 6-year-old daughter Noreen. The little family had travelled to Sydney by train from their home at Biniguy, just west of Moree, for their first 'real' vacation together; they had never been to the city before.

Businessman Erik Dahlen sat in the stern of the same deck, facing aft. He glanced up momentarily as he turned a page of his newspaper and was startled to see huge liner almost on top of them.

He heard shouts from below, when, almost simultaneously, the deafening roar of the big ship's horn abruptly shattered the idyllic scene. Heads whipped around as a second thunderous blast exploded from the liner's horn. Startled by its close proximity, they were even more horrified to see the tall steel bow of a large ship towering over them, higher than the ferry's upper deck.

Passengers jumped up in fright and ran in panic to wherever they felt would be safer. Pandemonium broke out as schoolgirls screamed and mothers instinctively

snatched up their children. There was little time to think; people ran in every direction in a vain effort to escape the tons of steel bearing down on them.

Incredibly, up in the ferry's forward wheelhouse, Captain Barnes had, until that moment, been completely unaware of *Tahiti's* presence. The sudden, unexpected snarl of the two horn blasts so near made him jump. He spun around to look aft through the starboard wheelhouse window, but saw nothing.

Stepping across to the port side window, he peered out. To his shock, he saw *Tahiti's* bow just feet from the ferry's side. Clearly too late to avoid the inevitable, he instinctively sprang for the wheel and swung it hard to starboard with all his strength.

A voice cried, 'She's got us!' ² then the liner's bow struck the ferry by the aft gangway. The ferry had not even had time to react to her Captain's wheel movement.

At first, it seemed *Tahiti* would simply push *Greycliffe* aside, but within seconds the ferry's bow wheeled around until she lay perpendicular to *Tahiti's* course. Accompanied by the screams of her panicking passengers, the surge of liner's bow wave thrust *Greycliffe* through the water ahead of her, pushing the ferry over enough to submerge her starboard rail and put several feet of water over the main deck.

When the stem of the Tahiti hit the Greycliffe it seemed to bury itself into her and push her forward. At the same time, the Greycliffe seemed to turn, climb up the stem of the Tahiti, list to starboard, and then her port side left the water. ³

As she listed, Stan Whalley climbed up over the ferry's port railing and crawled forward, along the outside of the vessel. As he passed the gangway, he glanced down momentarily at the panic-stricken faces of those fighting to escape the cabins—an image which haunted him all his remaining days—then he continued forward until he reached the bow propeller. ⁴

John Corby, on the upper deck, dashed for lifebelts for his wife and daughter. Balancing awkwardly, he turned to see them for a split second holding hands at the top of the stairs. ⁵ Then *Greycliffe* rolled over and they were gone.

With the sickening creak-and-snap of splintering timber, *Tahiti's* sharp steel bow burst through the wooden ferry like an axe, and split her in two. 'The decks of the *Greycliffe* came tumbling down and... passengers [were] flung in all directions,' recounted one witness. ⁶ Barely faltering, the momentum of the 8000-ton liner carried her on through the debris, portions of the ferry passing down each side.

Terrified passengers in the saloons fought to escape, thrashing desperately against the force of seawater as it burst in towards them. Those on deck were sucked deep into the underwater darkness as the ferry's broken body sank to the bottom.

Cold water found *Greycliffe's* furnaces. With a roar, the bow heaved as the boiler imploded. With a gush, a great cloud of steam shot into the air, intermingled with flying pieces of timber. Water boiled and hissed as it closed over the ferry's pitiful remains.

It had happened so quickly, William Barnes was still in the wheelhouse until it was well underwater. Luckier than many, he could escape through an open window without having to fight anyone else for it.

Stan Whalley held onto the bow near the forward propeller as the ferry sank. He went all the way down with her and felt her hit the bottom. Although holding his breath, he found his chest expanding and contracting from the water pressure. It tore muscles in his chest and he wanted to scream in pain. Panicking, the non-swimmer

❧ The Collision ❧

fought and kicked upwards. His leg numb from a blow he could not remember, he shot to the surface 'blowing like a whale and... swearing like a trooper'.⁷

Initially knocked unconscious by the impact, 14-year-old John Carr was quickly brought around by the cold harbour water, and swam for his life. Schoolgirl Gene Wise opened her eyes under water only to see *Tahiti's* propeller coming straight for her, but swam out of its path before it whooshed by.

Erik Dahlen broke the surface gasping for air. Finding nothing to cling to, he sank again, but then, surfacing a second time, he came upon a lifebelt and grabbed it to support himself. Exhausted, he hung on with all his strength.

Ken Horler found his leg tangled in rope as he reached the surface and was dragged down again. Thinking he would not survive, a vision of his mother's face appeared before him. Then, in the next moment, he disentangled himself. Choking on mouthfuls of salt water, he burst out into the fresh air, gasping, coughing, and bleeding from cuts.⁸

All around him was chaos. The water was alive with dozens of bobbing heads, spluttering and screaming, hands groping for anything to keep them above water. Surrounded by the remnants of what moments ago was a perfectly stable Sydney ferry, Ken Horler clambered to safety atop what he later discovered was one of the two wheelhouses, and helped others aboard.

Schoolboy Ron Ewing, though injured himself, helped a middle-aged woman, and held her above the surface of the water. Leslie Brook, who went down twice before he found something to cling to, fought to keep afloat.

...I grabbed a piece of wood. It was not very big, and another man grabbed it, too, and made me let go.⁹

He found another piece of debris to cling to and, upon seeing his friend Doris Garrett struggling, pushed it over to her, so she could use it too. 'Quick, quick,' she called to him, 'I am going down'.¹⁰

Dancing teacher, Mabel Sully, came to the surface bleeding. She had been struck by something underwater and sustained critical injuries. Her daughter, Dorothy, a nurse at Royal Alexandra Hospital, had been with her on the ferry. Paddling through the debris, she found her disoriented mother and kept her afloat until help arrived.

To his horror, John Corby found himself in the water surrounded by bodies as they rose to the surface. He frantically searched for his wife and daughter, but could not find them.

Fred Jones supported an unconscious girl he found floating a short distance away, and, upon seeing Stan Whalley nearby in obvious pain, called over to him, 'Are you alright, brother?'¹¹ Whalley replied that he was, and clung firmly to a board to keep himself afloat while they waited for help.

At this moment, the Water Police launch *Cambria* rounded Bradleys Head, travelling towards Circular Quay, on routine patrol. Sergeant William Shakespeare, in command of the vessel, could hardly believe the unexpected sight that lay before him. He increased speed and raced to the scene, immediately ordering constables George Day and Ernest Maguire into the water.

Passing ferries and all manner of other vessels rushed to the scene. The Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* was dispatched from Watsons Bay; the Sydney Harbour Trust's steam launch *Lady Hopetoun* hurried over; the ferry *Kummulla*, which had just landed

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

passengers at Taronga Zoo, immediately turned back; the tug *Bimbi* rushed over from near Garden Island and the Royal Australian Navy's workboat *Sapphire* diverted from its course as soon as it saw the commotion.

The ferry *Woollahra* turned from near Fort Denison and raced back to lower her lifeboats. As she arrived at the scene, a man sprang from her deck to rescue an exhausted woman floundering in the water. Then shouts from passengers drew the crew's attention to a person floating just below the surface. Two men dived in and brought an unconscious woman aboard, where she was eventually resuscitated.

Elizabeth Carruthers, a passenger on board the same ferry, was shocked to recognise her own son Jim amongst the people in the water. She watched helplessly as he sank below the surface.

...I lost control of myself. I pleaded with everyone on deck to go to the rescue. Just as my heart was breaking to think that I could not give any assistance – as, even if I had dived in I could never have reached him on time – he appeared above the surface.¹²

She was overcome with relief when he was rescued a few moments later; he was alive, but still unconscious when he arrived at Sydney Hospital.

John Corby was rescued by two men who approached through the wreckage in a small rowboat. One of the men extended an oar toward him. 'Catch a hold of the oar, digger!'¹³ he called, and Corby was hauled aboard. Just at that moment *Kummulla* pulled alongside and Corby was passed from the boat up to eager hands on the ferry.

Greycliffe's Captain Barnes was found clinging to a raft and was taken aboard the ferry *Kurraba*. He soon recovered sufficiently to return in a lifeboat to help rescue others.

Woollahra's boats later brought seven survivors ashore, including Captain Barnes, but they also brought in two severely disfigured bodies. *Bimbi* retrieved twelve survivors and a body from the water, whilst *Sapphire* was able to rescue another dozen. *Cambria* rescued eleven more and found the body of James Treadgold.

Stan Whalley, Leslie Brook, Leila Scott, Gene Wise, and Doris Garrett, amongst several others, were picked up by the tug *Bonny Bell*. Doris Garrett had searched in vain for her father, who had also been on *Greycliffe*. Now, safely aboard *Bonny Bell*, she let her feelings go and burst into inconsolable tears. Soon, the little group was transferred to *Captain Cook* and were landed at Parsley Bay shortly after 5.30 p.m.¹⁴

As *Captain Cook* came alongside Parsley Bay Wharf, Leslie Brook could see his father waiting for him on the jetty. Knowing Leslie always came home with *Greycliffe*, he had been extremely fearful for his son's safety. He was relieved when Leslie called out from *Cook's* deck, 'I'm alright Dad!'¹⁵ Once ashore, the wet and bedraggled survivors were taken by car to Sydney Hospital in Macquarie Street.

Ken Horler was set ashore at Central Wharf in Vacluse. He hurried home worrying he would be in strife with his father. Not only was he late, but his school uniform was wet, and he had lost both his hat and his school bag.¹⁶

John Corby was brought ashore at Circular Quay, with seven other survivors. He staggered from *Kummulla* with bloodied face and exclaimed to the shocked crowd, 'Oh God, my poor wife and child. They are gone!'¹⁷

Many of the surviving passengers and the bodies of those who had died were taken to the Man'o'War Steps, on the eastern side of the Fort Macquarie Tram Depot.¹⁸

❧ The Collision ❧

It became a temporary casualty clearing station where men of the Central District Ambulance Service treated the injured, with the assistance of the Police, civilians and workers from the depot.

A young woman, disoriented, shivering from cold and displaying signs of shock, anxiously searched for her mother, who had been with her on the ferry. A schoolboy came ashore, his leg deeply lacerated and his trouser leg torn off. Another survivor, in great pain and unable to walk, arrived with her clothing and stockings torn to shreds. Many of the survivors were bloodied and all of them suffered from shock and exposure.

As the news broke, streams of anxious friends and relatives arrived at Bennelong Point. Several hundred onlookers also lined the waterfront, hampering the work of medical personnel and the police.

Indescribable scenes were witnessed as the news of the disaster quickly travelled... frantic women were rushing about inquiring after husbands and relatives.

As the dead and wounded were brought ashore, women wept hysterically and rushed the barriers.¹⁹

The dead were laid out on the pathway by the Man'o'War Steps, where police prepared them to be taken to the City Morgue for identification. Meanwhile, a relay of ambulances rushed the injured up Macquarie Street to Sydney Hospital and returned for more.

At the hospital, people ran from room to room searching for missing family. Surrounded by some 30 doctors and medical students, Dr. Winston did his utmost to oversee what had become bedlam, as each new load of injured arrived, needing to be treated.

Seldom have the resources of the Sydney Hospital been so sorely taxed.... most of the survivors displayed heroic fortitude, and quietly waited their turn to be attended. One of the most terribly injured of them all, John Barrett...bravely smoked a cigarette without a murmur.²⁰

Distraught relatives also gathered at the morgue seeking news of missing family. To their horror, many soon found themselves standing before the body of a husband or a wife—even worse a child—to identify them for the authorities.

On the harbour, passengers on passing ferries jostled for the best view of the accident scene in the fading dusk light. The water was littered with debris, and no-one could believe so much wreckage had come from one small ferry.

Broken roof racks, still containing lifebelts, gave grave testimony to the swiftness of the accident. Barely distinguishable, the aft wheelhouse drifted aimlessly with the tide. Here, amongst the mess of seats and broken wood, a handbag was seen, there a briefcase. A child's doll. A businessman's hat.

As night fell, many were still feared missing. In the twilight, Captain Carter and the men of the Harbour Trust Fire Brigade, aboard the fire tug *Pluvius*, continued the search by spotlight until well after 8.00 p.m. They were unable to recover any further bodies, but great amounts of wreckage were taken aboard to clear the harbour's shipping lanes. Overnight, the accident site was marked with a green buoy carrying a red flag and flashing light.

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

Most of *Greycliffe*'s dead and injured were brought ashore at the Man'O'War Steps at Bennelong Point, where a crowd of several hundred onlookers quickly gathered. The dead were laid out on the pathway, where police prepared them to be taken to the City Morgue for identification, whilst a relay of ambulances rushed the injured up Macquarie Street to Sydney Hospital.

© Graeme Andrews Collection

A busy Circular Quay in the 1920s. Large numbers of people gathered here as news of the collision spread and survivors were brought ashore. One of these, John Corby, staggered from the ferry *Kummulla* with bloodied face and exclaimed to the shocked crowd, 'Oh God, my poor wife and child. They are gone!'

© Graeme Andrews Collection

❧ The Collision ❧

That evening, a deeply distressed William Barnes was brought home to his little house in Dulwich Hill, suffering from shock and the effects of immersion. He remained under medical attention throughout the night and refused to see reporters.

All this time, *Tahiti* was anchored off Point Piper. The Union Steamship Company sent their Engineering, Marine and Repair Superintendents to the ship to examine her for damage. Her steel hull had protected her well; all that showed were long scratches down each side of her bow where paint had been scraped off.

Sun newspaper reporter, Norman Head, was despatched to the ship to obtain photos of the bow for the next edition. He was surprised to find virtually nothing to photograph.

Pilot Carson remained aboard *Tahiti* into the evening. His youngest two boys often returned home from school on *Greycliffe*, but he was forced to remain at his post, not knowing whether his boys were also amongst the victims.

Around 7.30 p.m., a decision was made that the ship should continue her voyage to Wellington, and Carson was finally picked up by the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* at 8.00 p.m.²¹ Understandably shaken by the afternoon's events, he was subsequently given what the newspapers called 'special leave'.²²

Several hours behind schedule, *Tahiti* departed Sydney at 8.08 p.m. Astern of her, the lights of Sydney grew fainter as the vessel picked up speed and headed out into the Tasman Sea.

Sydney Hospital in Macquarie Street, where most of the injured were brought following the collision.

© City of Sydney Archives

❧ *Greycliffe - Stolen Lives* ❧

ABOVE: (L to R) John, Donald and Ruby Crook, in a photograph shortly before Ruby and Donald took their fateful trip to Sydney with Ruby's mother, Florence, in November 1927. All three died in the accident; John lost his wife, his only child and his mother-in-law.

© Jean Lapthorne

LEFT: One of the most dramatic pictures that appeared in the newspapers on the day after the collision was this one, depicting a disoriented woman being brought ashore at the Man'O'War Steps on Bennelong Point by an ambulance officer and a police-man.

© News Ltd.

❧ The Cost ❧

GREYCLIFFE took a broad cross section of the community to the bottom of the harbour with her. Her victims were aged from just two years to 81 years old. Amongst them were six school children, aged eleven to fifteen, and the Science Master of Sydney Boys' High School. Three doctors went to their deaths, one in the N.S.W. Prisons Service, another the Chief Quarantine Officer of N.S.W. and the third a Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Australian Navy. Three further Navy personnel were drowned, as well as seven tradesmen from Garden Island Dockyard. Six holiday-makers from N.S.W. and Victoria also met their deaths alongside Australia's first female pilot and a six-times Mayor of Leichhardt. An architect, a retired Master Mariner, three retired gentlemen and seven housewives completed the sad list.

All these losses were tragic; two cases, however, were particularly so. In one instance, members of three generations of one family were killed. Visiting from Melbourne, Ruby Crook, her 2-year-old son Donald, and her retired mother, Florence Frost, all died together in the accident. Ruby's husband Jack, who was at home in Elsternwick at the time, lost his wife, his only child and his mother-in-law.

Another sad case was the loss of the young wife and 6-year-old daughter of John Corby, a railway fitter from Biniguy. Visiting Sydney for the first time, the family had originally intended to take their holidays in August, but they were postponed until the beginning of November. On the afternoon of the accident they had planned to take the ferry to Watsons Bay to spend an enjoyable afternoon together, then travel back to the city by tram. They had been in the city barely two days.

Many streets in Vaucluse and Watsons Bay were home to a casualty. In Fitzwilliam Road almost every second house suffered a loss or injury. Many people were simply enjoying a quiet run home from the city on the ferry, just as they had done countless times before.

The morning after the accident Sydney's newspapers were filled with stories of the disaster. Every paragraph was headlined with an emotional eye-catcher: 'Appalling Harbour Disaster'; 'Caught in Wreckage'; 'Sisters Killed'; 'Piteous Scenes'; 'Missing Man'; 'Wife and Daughter Lost'; 'Crushed to Pieces'; 'Heartrending Scenes'; 'Great Confusion'. The *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote,

The greatest disaster that has ever occurred on Sydney Harbour took place yesterday afternoon about 4.30 o'clock, when the Union Steamship Company's R.M.S. Tahiti rammed and sank the Sydney Ferry Company's steamer Greycliffe off Bradley's Head.¹

The paper reported that the bodies of eleven people had been recovered. Twenty-six were reported missing and more than 50 had been injured and treated in hospital. Special editions gave readers updated casualty lists and the latest details. *The Bulletin* noted with sadness,

The one triumph that man has snatched from the hungry sky-blue waters is the heroism and unselfishness displayed by those who struggled amid the wreckage. Men who had managed to clutch a lifebelt or a splintered spar gave it up to women and

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

children. Anyone lucky enough to have grasped a plank or a floating seat tried to push the chance-to-live closer to others in the swirling water.

One schoolboy gamely supported a girl till, coming on a lifebuoy that sustained them, both were picked up. Other boys on their way from school proved of Anzac breed; nor were the girls lacking in courage and unselfishness.

But the dark and hideous fate of those trapped in the cabins!²

The unenviable task of recovering those who did not survive was undertaken by Harbour Trust divers Thomas Carr and William Harris. The day after the accident they were lowered to the wreck, lying in about sixty feet of water, and cut their way inside.

It was dangerous work and only slender ropes and thin air lines attached them to a pontoon on the surface. Carr and Harris worked in 2-hour shifts, supplied with air by four men constantly employed in turning the wheels of the air pumps.

The two divers used saws to cut away decking which was impeding their search or endangering their safety. Occasionally, there were tense moments when large portions of decking broke away and shot to the surface, threatening their lines. Once, when workmen attempted to bring a large piece of wreckage aboard the pontoon, it slipped out of its sling and crashed back into the water above the divers.

It was distressing work, and considered one of the most terrible tasks performed in connection to the tragedy. Harris explained,

In the gloom of the cabin a dreadful sight met my eyes... Nine bodies – some of them men and others women, and one boy of about three – were huddled together... floating in the water. The boy was floating with his head against the ceiling.

I almost cried... when I got his body. The little chap lay in my arms as if he were still alive.³

That first day, thirteen bodies were recovered. Amongst them were Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander Paradise, Dr. Charles Reid, and architect Alfred Barker, who were found in the smoking saloon. The body of high school teacher Reginald Wright was recovered, and Mary Corby was found with her young daughter held firmly in her arms. Three others were found with no obvious wounds; sadly they had simply been pinned down by twisted and broken timber.

One of the men had on a pair of spectacles, and near him floated the sodden remains of the afternoon paper he had been reading...⁴

Under drizzling rain the bodies were brought to the surface and taken aboard the lighter *Delilah*. Ferries passing the scene of the accident lowered their flags to half-mast.

At Sydney Boys' High School, Science Master Reginald Wright's absence was met with shock. Classes were cancelled and Headmaster George Saxby called a special assembly at midday. He likened the loss to that of a brother, and sent the students home at the assembly's conclusion.

Expressions of sympathy began to arrive from many quarters. Prime Minister Stanley Bruce sent a letter to N.S.W. Premier Thomas Rainsford Bavin, expressing the

❧ The Cost ❧

Federal Government's sympathy. The State Governor, Admiral Sir Dudley de Chair, also sent his condolences on behalf of himself and Lady de Chair. He wrote,

*...we would be much obliged if you would kindly convey our heartfelt and deep sympathy to the relatives of those who lost their lives... [and] to those injured in this unfortunate occurrence... our earnest hope that they will all speedily recover.*⁵

Though not new to state politics, Bavin, a 53-year-old native of Kaiapoi, New Zealand, had been in office barely one month, having just replaced the Lang Government. He expressed his government's sympathy before the Legislative Assembly, and his sentiments were echoed by new Opposition Leader, Labor's John 'Jack' Lang, and Deputy Leader William Missingham of the Country Party. Members stood for a minute's silence, after which the House was adjourned for the day.

The first funerals were held two days after the accident occurred, on Saturday, 5 November. That rainy, dull day, twelve of *Greycliff's* victims were buried in South Head Cemetery, two in Rookwood Cemetery and one in Manly Cemetery.

During the day, 'an air of sadness hung like a pall over the whole municipality of Vacluse', wrote the *Sydney Morning Herald*.⁶ The community mourned individually and as a whole and most businesses remained closed for the day. Mourners and onlookers lined the streets to escort the seemingly endless procession as it wound its way from private residences up the hill towards the cemetery, led by the band of the Royal Australian Navy's flagship H.M.A.S. *Melbourne*.

One after the other, each funeral party arrived at the cemetery's gates. The mass of mourners swelled and the small graveyard quickly became overcrowded. The number of funerals and large crowds provided a spectacle, reported the newspapers, which had 'never before been seen in Sydney'.⁷

The funeral of Doctor Charles Reid was one of the first to arrive at the cemetery. It followed a service at his private residence in The Crescent in Vacluse, both ceremonies conducted by Reverend John Edwards of Rose Bay Presbyterian Church. Joining family and friends were State Attorney-General Francis Boyce, the Police Commissioner, the Woollahra Town Clerk, the Secretary of the Board of Health, the Inspector-General of the Insane, the President of the Nielsen Park Trust, and representatives from the Department of Public Health.

It was closely followed by the funeral of old Leichhardt Councillor and six-times Mayor, James Treadgold. His service, conducted by the Reverend J. F. Cherry, was held in an overflowing St. Peter's Church on Old South Head Road in Watsons Bay. A large number of family and friends attended, accompanied by the Mayor and aldermen of Vacluse, and representatives of the Masonic Lodge, of which he was a member.

Chief Petty Officer William Renton's funeral was the next to take place. He was buried with full naval honours in a service conducted by Reverend W. E. Maltby, assisted by Chaplain Henderson of the Royal Australian Navy. At the conclusion, three volleys were fired over the grave and a bandsman sounded the 'Last Post'. The firing party then fixed bayonets and solemnly marched from the cemetery.

Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander Paradise also received a full naval funeral, his coffin draped with the Australian flag. The service was conducted by Canon Howard Lea, assisted by Chaplain Henderson. The Royal Australian Navy Band played Chopin's 'Marche Funèbre', and the funeral similarly concluded with the firing of

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three volleys over his grave, followed by the 'Last Post'. He left a young, pregnant wife and a son under two years of age.

One of the largest funerals was that of Reginald Wright, held at Rookwood Cemetery. A member of the teaching staff at Sydney Boys' High School for some eleven years, he was a popular and respected teacher, whom the students fondly referred to as 'Jasper'. More than 800 mourners attended, many of whom were his students, who marched bare-headed behind the cortege.

Alongside family and friends were past and present students, the Headmaster, fellow teachers, and representatives from the Teachers' Union, the Education Department, the Old Boys' Union, the school Parents' Association, the Teachers' Training College, and Sydney Technical College.

One of his favourite sayings, as the bell rang at the end of a lesson, was recalled with sadness at his funeral: 'the curfew tolls'.⁸ The school magazine later wrote, 'He was the salt of the earth; boys and men were the better for their contact with him. The world is a better, brighter place because he lived in it'.⁹

The Greater Public Schools' cricket match scheduled that day between Newington College and Sydney Boys' High was cancelled as a mark of respect.

Australia's first female pilot, 49-year-old widow Millicent Maude Bryant, was also buried that day, in Manly Cemetery. The ceremony was conducted by Reverend A. R. Ebbs of Manly's St. Matthew's Church of England, and was accompanied by five aircraft from Mascot Aerodrome which circled overhead.

Piloting one of them, her instructor, Captain Leggatt, descended to barely 150 feet over the grave and dropped a wreath of blue delphiniums and red carnations. An attached card read, '...with the deepest sympathy of the committee and members of the Australian Aero Club'.¹⁰

As her oldest son, George, was in England and middle son, John, was honeymooning in Tasmania, only her youngest son, 19-year-old Bowen, was able to attend the funeral. However, he was accompanied by her parents and brothers, and by representatives of the Department of Civil Aviation and the Australian Aero Club.

A lady now somewhat forgotten by history, Bryant became the first Australian woman to obtain a pilot's licence, just eight months prior to the *Greycliffe* accident. What mark would she have left on Australian aviation history had she survived?

The following morning, Sunday, 6 November, a memorial service was held in St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, conducted by Canon William Cakebread. The congregation included Sir Dudley and Lady de Chair, and the State Attorney-General, Francis Boyce, and his wife.

Canon Cakebread noted how the accident had shocked and appalled the people of Sydney, and reminded them of words spoken at one of the burial services: 'in the midst of life we are in death'.¹¹ Recalling the heroism of a man who dived from *Tahiti's* deck to save people, and the bravery of survivors who helped each other, he emphasised that 'the darkness of the tragedy was tinged with the brightness of great deeds'.¹²

At St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Phillip Street, Reverend Hugh Paton noted that a 'pathetic circumstance'¹³ of the harbour disaster was that the entire suburb of Vaucluse was in mourning. He told how the day before he had been in a Vaucluse

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street which had been robbed of six residents, and asked the congregation to stand in silence, while the organ played the 'Scottish Lament'.¹⁴

At St. Mary's Cathedral, Archbishop Kelly told his congregation at 7:00 a.m. mass,

*The catastrophe suddenly and fatally overwhelmed the passengers on the ferry. How awful to them and shocking to us was the moment of the realisation of their untimely and unthought-of death. The rescued we congratulate. The relatives of the lost are the objects of our condolence and prayers.*¹⁵

Similar services were held at St. James, in King Street, and several suburban churches. Ministers all over Sydney spoke of the tragedy from the pulpit that first Sunday after the accident and offered prayers of sympathy for the families of the victims.

On Monday, 7 November, little Noreen Corby and her mother Mary were laid to rest after a stirring double ceremony at the Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery in Moree. Grief-stricken John Corby was joined by an exceptionally large number of mourners from local communities who were touched by his loss.

As early as 7.00 a.m., a procession of vehicles from the townships of Biniguy and Pallamallawa began making its way into Moree. So many people attended the Requiem Mass, the church could not contain them all. The local newspaper sadly reported,

It was a pathetic spectacle, when at the conclusion of the Mass, the small white coffin of the little girl, and the larger coffin of the mother, both smothered with beautiful floral emblems were borne solemnly out of the church...

*It was one of the largest and most impressive funerals ever witnessed in Moree, the procession of motor cars being over a mile long.*¹⁶

Last rites were performed by Father English, who was assisted by Father O'Connor. The funeral was also attended by Moree's mayor, Alderman McElhone.

Almost simultaneously, in Melbourne, a triple funeral was held for 29-year-old Ruby Crook, her 2-year-old son, Donald, and her 58-year-old mother, Florence Frost. A motorcade left the Crook's home in Allison Street, Elsternwick, and headed for Melbourne General Cemetery where the service was conducted by Reverend Jones of All Saints Church of England, St. Kilda.

The local community was well represented, with an extraordinarily large number of vehicles in the motorcade and several hundred mourners at the funeral.

That afternoon in Sydney, Lord Mayor, Alderman John Mostyn, convened a meeting at the Sydney Town Hall to officially open the 'Greycliffe Disaster Relief Fund' for the relatives of the victims. He announced the receipt of three donations to start the fund, £50 from Amelia Marshall of Waverley, £1 1s from L. H. Gray of the Moore Park Pharmacy, and £1 1s from Sydney Boys' High School student Frank Little.¹⁷

Within days, contributions to the relief fund had risen to £986 11s, helped by a £15 donation from the Japanese Club of Mosman. The honorary treasurer of the fund was Edmund Horler, Town Clerk of Vacluse, and father of accident survivor, 14-year-old Ken Horler. Others members of the committee were Aldermen A. Charles Samuel, George Hooper, and Harry A. J. Abbott.

Over the weekend, the ferry's almost completely destroyed ladies cabin was located on the harbour floor. It lay over sixty feet from the main portion of the hull. On Monday

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afternoon, after several hours of arduous work, it was raised to the surface. It took a great deal of time to attach slings to the 25-ton section before lifting could begin. Then, just as it appeared above the surface, the hawsers slipped and it dropped back into the water with a great splash. The divers went down again to resecure the slings and it was not until 30 minutes later that they returned to the surface, satisfied the lift could safely be resumed.

Finally, some 4½ hours after work commenced, the section was raised and suspended above the water by cranes aboard the Sydney Harbour Trust's sheerlegs. It was left hanging overnight, a portion of the name *Greycliffe* clearly visible on the hull.

During the day, crowded ferries had passed the site as close as possible, and eager commuters studied the progress of the operation. Numbers of boats and small craft surrounded the pontoons and jostled for the best view. Crowds lined the wall at Fort Macquarie impatiently awaiting news from the boats coming from the accident site. Others, armed with binoculars, manned vantage points along Bradleys Head and at Taronga Park Wharf.

Although no further bodies were found during that day, the Water Police patrolled the area during the evening, fearing the movement of the section may have released bodies of the missing, allowing them to float to the surface.

The accident had deeply shocked *Tahiti's* passengers. Their voyage to Wellington, which for many should have been an enjoyable holiday, was subdued by the tragedy. Most passengers had been out on deck during the departure from Sydney and many had witnessed the course of events first hand. They also saw one of *Tahiti's* crew, greaser Fred Corby, dive overboard to rescue three people. During the voyage, they made a presentation to him in recognition of his courage; he would later be awarded a bravery medal by the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society.

On 9 November, 15-year-old schoolgirl Doris Garrett, who had been aboard *Greycliffe* with her father, wrote a touching letter to a friend, Mrs. Hammond and her son Ian, whom she babysat. The family had only been in Australia a short time, and had not yet made many friends. Her poignant letter warrants reproduction for its personal perspective. She wrote;

Only bad news to tell you this time. Perhaps you have already heard about the terrible ferry accident but as it happened it was the 4.15 from town which Dad and I catch every day. You will see from this letter that I am quite safe but they haven't found Dad yet.

Coming home as usual on Thursday, we were watching the Tahiti, one of the Union Line steamers, coming down the harbour; it seemed closer than usual but we enjoyed it, then as we neared Bradley's Head both boats seemed to swerve and we were hurried round the other side. The bump was awful, the water rushed up behind a seat which knocked me into the water, I was about the first in. I thought of Dad but couldn't reach him. In the water I was turned over and over by the force of the propellers from the big boat and the suction dragged everybody down. I worked my legs trying to get up quicker but was soon exhausted and just let myself go. I seemed to be going deeper and deeper judging by the colour of the water. Still I didn't open my mouth or swallow any water.

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When I came to the top I was by myself and was too weak to stay up so I went down again. The next time I came up I saw two boys and a girl sitting on a floating seat. They couldn't help me but one boy called out to me and encouraged me to get to them. How I did it I don't know but I got to the raft and could just manage to keep my head out of the water. My legs were getting cramped and all I could think of was Dad.

After being in the water about 10 minutes a little tug came along and threw out two lifebelts. I didn't get one so I determined not be alone and climbed up the side of the boat. Once on the boat I let go of my feelings and screamed out for Dad.

Well they took us into Sydney to see who should go to the hospital. They asked me to go but I came home to Mum... When I arrived home only to find that Dad was not there I think I could have died. I only got 1 bruise where the seat knocked me over. I lost my bag full of books, purse, new hat and Dad.

The divers are busy raising the boat and seeing if there is anybody buried in the sand. I hope they find Dad.

...The people have been so good and although we hadn't made many friends they have been in ever since Thursday. We received some lovely letters from the Island about Dad and I am trying to answer as many as I can.

I have been to see as many people as I was able to and most of the women who have lost anyone are nearly frantic but Mum is bearing up well. She hasn't slept much but I have slept more than usual I think.

...Oh, Mr Hammond called and offered his sympathies to Mum and offered to do anything she wanted. He has been at the morgue all the time waiting to see Dad, he said he wouldn't go till he saw him and he also said that Dad was one of the finest men that ever walked on this earth! I thought it was a wonderful thing to say.

Last night Dad's boss from the Island came with his wife and he was unable to speak except for an occasional word here and there but he couldn't speak highly enough of Dad and how valuable he was.

I've just remembered that for 6 weeks I have had the feeling that something was going to happen, about a month ago, one Saturday, I was doing my homework, Dad was reading and Mum knitting and I suddenly said "Oh I can't do this. I can't settle down to it" and Mum said "How do you mean, what do you feel like?" "I feel as if something terrible is going to happen and I am so excited." Then Dad spoke up and said, "That's nothing to be excited about because something might happen to one of us," and I said "Yes, that's the worst part of it. There's going to be an accident and one of us will be in it."

I had been feeling sick all the week and on Wednesday Dad said he would take me to the doctor's. On Thursday morning I felt queer and didn't know what I was doing.... It seems hardly true, but I really did know it was coming...¹⁸

Just a day after Doris wrote her letter, a heartbreaking mélange of both relief and grief greeted the news her father's body had at last been found. It floated to the surface with two other bodies when a part of the ferry's hull was moved during salvage work. The two others were identified as those of 11-year-old schoolboy, Bernard Landers, and 70-year-old retired gardener, William Jones, who was identified by an electricity bill he carried.

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The following day, Friday, 11 November, four more bodies were recovered, when they, too, floated to the surface around the wreck site. They were subsequently identified as dockyard workers William Barry and Frank Hedges, the latter of whom had a handkerchief in his pocket embossed with the initials 'FH', Prisons Medical Officer Doctor Robert Lee-Brown, patron of the Moore Park Golf Club, and retired Master Mariner Captain John Ragg, who was identified by a receipt in his name which was found on him. Out of respect for their patron, the Moore Park Golf Club postponed the Marcey Cup competition due to be played the following day.

Later that same afternoon, diver Harris located the body of 15-year-old schoolgirl Betty Sharp. Moving into a part of the hull which had previously not been searched, he was startled when the form of a young girl appeared out of the darkness. His light revealed the pitiful figure standing upright with outstretched arms, her clothes in shreds; one of her feet was caught in some twisted steel.

Harris wrote on his slate, 'HAVE FOUND THE BODY OF A LITTLE GIRL'¹⁹ and sent it up to the pontoon. After much effort, as much physically as emotionally, Harris released her foot and sent her body to the surface.

During the day, funerals were held for Charles Garrett and Bernard Landers at South Head Cemetery, whilst William Jones' body was cremated at Rookwood. Bernard Landers' family had prepared a special tribute to him, unveiled at the funeral. His epitaph read,

*It seems but a day since he bade us goodbye
His heart full of hope and his spirit so high
How little we thought when he left us that day
The grim hand of death would soon tear him away
So gentle and kind – how we miss his dear face
Now we know that on earth we can ne'er fill his place...*²⁰

Bernard's father, Paul, who was the Master of Languages at Sydney School of Arts, sent a letter to the Coroner a few days later to express his thanks for their assistance and sympathy since the accident. He wrote,

On behalf of my wife and family, I wish to express our sincere gratitude to you and your officials (at the City Morgue) who have been so kind, forbearing and helpful to us in the sad loss of our dearly beloved son, Bernard, who met his death by the "Greycliffe" disaster, in Sydney Harbour, on November 3rd inst. We shall never forget the services you have rendered us and we pray that God's blessing be with you in the great and noble task to succour and help those in their affliction.

*Kindly convey also to the Divers, who so nobly responded to their heroic task in relieving so many anxious souls of the most agonising suspense, our sincere thanks.*²¹

By Friday evening, 11 November, eight days since the accident, the death toll stood at 35, whilst five still remained listed as missing.

Expressions of sympathy continued to arrive. Governor de Chair received a telegram of sympathy from the Duke and Duchess of York, whilst Premier Bavin announced he had received messages from The Deputy Premier of Queensland, the Swiss Consul, the Italian Royal Vice-Consul, the Greek Consul-General, the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the Newcastle Naval, Military and Veterans' Association, and the Association for Developing Wireless in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

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On 7 November 1927, a 25-ton section of the hull and ladies' cabin was raised by the Sydney Harbour Trust's sheerlegs. It was left hanging in its hawsers overnight, a portion of the name *Greycliffe* clearly visible on the hull.

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❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

A young lad watches recovery operations as his ferry passes the accident site a few days after the collision.

© ScreenSound Australia

Greycliffe's funnel, surrounded by small craft filled with onlookers, protrudes above the surface in the shallows of Athol Bay.

© ScreenSound Australia

❧ The Cost ❧

Lord Mayor Mostyn also gave notice of the receipt of sympathy messages from Lord Novar of H.M.S. *Renown* at Portsmouth²², from the Mayors of several Sydney municipal councils and from the Queensland Country Women's Association.

The Directors of the Sydney Ferry Company forwarded £1225 to the Lord Mayor's relief fund and issued a statement in which they said,

*The board places on record its profound sorrow over this calamitous occurrence, and extends its heartfelt sympathy to all who are suffering distress of mind or pain of body in consequence of the sudden and unforeseen disaster; also its appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered by all those who so readily and effectively assisted in the work of rescue and resuscitation, to whose courage and skill is undoubtedly due the saving of many lives.*²³

On Sunday, 13 November, another two bodies were found floating near the accident site. They were recovered by the Water Police and delivered to the Morgue where they were identified as 37-year-old dockyard worker John Carroll, who was found wearing his Returned Serviceman's Badge, and 56-year-old spinster Eliza Asher. The search continued for the remaining three people assumed to have been on board.

In a letter to the Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 17 November, John Corby wrote from his home near Moree on behalf of himself, his parents and his parents-in-law. He expressed his gratitude to the city of Sydney for its kindness, in particular that of the Railway Department, the Police Department and the Harbours and Rivers Department. He penned,

*My wife and only child and myself were strangers, only down for one week's holiday, and we feel and appreciate the wonderful kindly sympathy the more on that account.*²⁴

It later transpired that Mary Corby's 16-year-old brother, Leslie, and her mother, Mary senior, had also planned to accompany them on their holiday, but this plan changed shortly before their departure.

Moreover, John Corby felt his wife may have had a premonition of the danger as she was hesitant to take the ferry trip on the day of the collision. Ironically, when they did decide to go, they actually missed the ferry they originally intended to catch, and thus became passengers on *Greycliffe*.

On 20 November, 59-year-old mother of two, Florence Robinson, succumbed to her injuries. One of the first to be plucked from the water, she was delivered to St. Luke's Hospital in Darlinghurst. After a short time she began to show signs of recovery, but suffered a relapse and died in her hospital bed.

The following day, her funeral was held at South Head Cemetery, which the *Sydney Morning Herald* called 'one of the largest seen in Vacluse'.²⁵ Reverend J. F. Cherry conducted the ceremony whilst Bishop D'Arcy Irvine spoke of her charity work in the community.

The broken remains of *Greycliffe's* main section were brought to the surface by the salvage vessel *Eagle* on Monday. Watched by enthusiastic sightseers in small boats and ashore, it was deposited on the beach by Taronga Park Wharf.

Portions of the vessel were still being raised days later and towed to the shallows of Athol Bight. A large portion, with the ferry's funnel protruding skyward from the

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water, was towed to within a few hundred yards of the wharf. There it awaited high tide and the opportunity to bring it in closer.

On 24 November, another two bodies were located in the wreck, but only one of them could be recovered and taken to the morgue. The well-decomposed body had spent three weeks underwater and the pocket knife and coins found in its pockets offered few clues to its identity. Some letters were also found but the ink had run and they were no longer legible. Nonetheless, as only three people were still listed as missing, the body was soon identified as that of 58-year-old Navy Engineer Edwin Conner of Watsons Bay, who had boarded *Greycliffe* at Garden Island. He was buried in South Head Cemetery the following day.

The second body, found wedged between wooden planks, could not be retrieved until a day later. One of only two still listed as missing, the extraordinary amount of gold and gem-encrusted jewellery found upon the body quickly confirmed its identity as 59-year-old German immigrant Eugen Wolff of Vaucluse. He was buried at South Head Cemetery on Saturday, 26 November.

Later that same day, in an unusual and unexpected twist, the remaining person on the list of the missing turned up alive when he walked into the Water Police station and assured police he was not on board.

Arthur Hardy was believed to have been amongst *Greycliffe*'s passengers as his attaché case and papers belonging to him were found floating in the water amongst the wreckage of the ferry on 3 November.

He explained he had in fact been on board when *Greycliffe* was berthed at Circular Quay, awaiting a friend. However, when he failed to appear before departure, Hardy jumped off again, just as the gangway was being hauled aboard. In his haste, he left his attaché case behind, and naturally, when it was found in the water after the accident, he was assumed to be amongst the victims.

That same evening he had left for the country and was completely unaware divers were searching for his body. When he returned to Sydney on 26 November, he was surprised to hear he was 'missing', and immediately reported to the Water Police to set the record straight.

Police now believed all the victims of the tragedy had been found. Sydney Ferries' Assistant Manager wrote to the Harbour Trust on 29 November, stating,

... [I] would advise that a most thorough inspection has been made of the remains of the "Greycliffe" and my Company feels sure that no more bodies remain in the vessel.

We are further strengthened in this connection through the verbal assurance of the Inspector in charge of the Water Police that all persons reported as missing in connection with the disaster have been accounted for.²⁶

Police nonetheless maintained patrols in the area of the wreck site for a short time in case bodies of people not reported as missing floated to the surface. Indeed no further bodies were recovered and the official death toll was finally set at forty.

❧ *State versus Commonwealth Jurisdiction* ❧

INITIALLY there was a great deal of disagreement about who should commission a Court of Marine Enquiry to investigate the accident. It was a complicated matter to determine whether the constitutional powers of the State of New South Wales or those of the Commonwealth of Australia should have precedence.

According to the Commonwealth Navigation (Amendment) Act of 1899, if a vessel was involved in an accident or incident resulting in the death of or injury to an individual, or damage to property, the authority in whose jurisdiction it fell was responsible for commissioning a Court of Marine Enquiry to investigate the matter.

Such a court should furthermore be constituted should there be reasonable suspicion that an incident occurred as the result of the misconduct or incompetency of a member of the crew.

Both of these prerequisites were fulfilled in the case of the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* collision.

The State Navigation Act of 1901 (Section 23) went into further detail, saying a Court of Marine Enquiry should be constituted to enquire into charges of misconduct or incompetency in cases where

*...a shipwreck or casualty occurs to [or where incompetency or misconduct occurs on] a ship on or near the coast of New South Wales or in the course of a voyage to a port within New South Wales; ...where some of the crew of a ship which has been wrecked or to which a casualty has occurred and who are competent witnesses to the fact are found in New South Wales; ...where the master, mate, or engineer of a ship who is charged with incompetency or misconduct on board that ship is found in New South Wales.*¹

Both the Commonwealth and State Acts required a Marine Court to be overseen by one or more judges of the District Court, in an open court, with the assistance of two assessors. The assessors only possessed the authority to advise, but not to make conclusions on any issue. Such courts had the power to cancel or suspend a Master's, Mate's or Engineer's Certificate of Competency, should it find him guilty of negligence. In respect to the authority to subpoena witnesses, a Marine Court held the same power as the Supreme Court.

In addition to this, Commonwealth law dictated that incidents involving overseas vessels fell under the jurisdiction of federal authorities, whereas incidents involving intrastate vessels registered in a particular state fell to the jurisdiction of that State.

The *Tahiti-Greycliffe* incident, however, was particularly unusual in that it involved both types of vessels, thus extending beyond the authority of either party.

Prime Minister Stanley Bruce lent his weight to the growing argument when he claimed the Commonwealth Solicitor-General, Sir Robert Garran, clearly had the authority to deal with the overseas vessel and felt this power should extend to all aspects of the collision.

He asserted the State of New South Wales had no authority to proceed beyond an inquiry into *Greycliffe* alone. Naturally, Solicitor-General Garran concurred, arguing,

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In my opinion a Court of Marine Inquiry under the Navigation Act of the Commonwealth has full power to investigate the accident... a State Court of Marine Inquiry has no power to deal with the certificates of the Officers or Pilots of this foreign going ship or of the ferry boat and it is doubtful whether it has the power under the State Navigation Act to hold an inquiry.²

In a written report, Garran quoted other cases where the power of inquiry had been granted to the Commonwealth and concluded,

It would be possible for a Court of Marine Inquiry to be constituted which would have jurisdiction 'double-banked' under Commonwealth and State law; but compliance with two sets of statutes and of rules of procedure thereunder would complicate matters and facilitate technical errors.

I think that the proper course is to hold an inquiry before a Court of Marine Inquiry under the Commonwealth Act.³

Impassioned by emotions in Sydney, the New South Wales Government vehemently protested. The fallout necessitated negotiation between State and Commonwealth at the highest level. After lengthy discussion, Premier Bavin and Prime Minister Bruce finally reached agreement that both parties would work to the full extent of their own powers. However, where constitutional authorities overlapped, they would co-operate with each other to their best ability.

This was, however, later amended to allow a joint investigation by both State and Commonwealth. The Prime Minister and Premier also concluded that the problems raised by the situation demonstrated the need for some revision of constitutional powers.

Scheduled to commence on Wednesday, 9 November 1927, the hearing would coincidentally commence on the same day as the Coroner's Inquest. Though running simultaneously, the two enquiries were distinctly separate; their interests were similar, but their objectives were not.

Whilst all this politicking was going on in Australia, *Tahiti* had arrived in Wellington. New Zealand Police took statements from the ship's officers, crew and passengers and forwarded them to Sydney in preparation for the imminent hearings.

❧ *The Court of Marine Enquiry, 1927-28* ❧

THE Court of Marine Enquiry was held in No. 3 Jury Court in Sydney from 9 November 1927 until 7 January 1928. Supreme Court Judge, the Honourable Justice James Lang Campbell, was appointed to preside over the hearing. The 69-year-old Scot was appointed to the bench in August 1886 and elevated to the Supreme Court in 1922; he was a man infamous for his convoluted statements. Two assessors were appointed to assist him, Captains C.Z. Lindbergh and William T. Howell.

In his opening statement, Judge Campbell announced,

*This Court has been constituted to make an enquiry as to the casualty affecting the Tahiti and the Greycliffe in the waters of Port Jackson on November 3.*¹

Then, in clear reference to the legal wrangling that had immediately preceded the hearing, he added,

*Both the Federal and the State Governments are in entire sympathy with the public concern in this matter and they have lost no time in constituting a Court to enable the necessary inquiry into the cause of this appalling disaster.*²

Knowing an enquiry of this nature would require reasonable time for the collection of evidence, Campbell asked counsel how much time they still needed to prepare. He weighed their opinions and immediately adjourned the Court a further week.

When the Enquiry reconvened on 16 November, it was announced that one of the two assessors, Captain William Howell, had resigned due to a conflict of interest. The surprise decision was made by the Director of Navigation, Captain Williams, during the intervening weekend. The reason given was that the captain had performed a survey of *Tahiti* for the Union Steamship Company in the past for which he had been paid; this effectively barred him from serving as an assessor in a hearing involving the vessel. He was replaced by Captain Frank W. Jolliffe.

When proceedings at last got underway, the first address was made by Mr. Holman, KC, appearing for the Commonwealth Navigation Department. He outlined the facts of the case, recalling that *Greycliffe* had departed Circular Quay at 4.14 p.m. and was due at Garden Island seven minutes later. *Tahiti* had departed Darling Harbour No. 5 Wharf just after 4.00 p.m. and was first sighted by the Master of *Burra-Bra* as he rounded Bennelong Point at 4.23 p.m.

Moving to the matter of speeds, he read aloud to the Court Harbour Trust regulation No. 43, which stipulated the maximums allowed within the Harbour. Whilst vessels other than ferry steamers, he announced, were limited to six knots west of Fort Denison and eight knots between Fort Denison and Bradleys Head, ferries were not limited to any maximum.

Then, addressing sailing regulations, he explained the prescribed courses for steamers proceeding to sea, as well as for ferries on the harbour. Their set courses were different but they intersected before reaching Bradleys Head.

Holman concluded that, judging by the distances travelled to reach the position where the accident occurred at 4.28 p.m., evidence suggested that *Greycliffe* was

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travelling at between eight and nine knots. Alternatively, he countered, evidence also showed *Tahiti* was travelling at a speed far greater than that which was allowed. As *Tahiti* appeared to be overtaking *Greycliffe*, this implied her speed, therefore, to have been approximately twelve knots.

Holman called on witnesses to support this. The first was a Gunner from the destroyer H.M.A.S. *Success* who estimated her speed at twelve to fourteen knots when passing Garden Island. Naval Police then estimated her speed to be about eleven knots. The Master of the ferry *Burra-Bra* supported this but told how, coming up from behind the two ships, he clearly saw *Greycliffe* change her course and head into *Tahiti*'s path.

Holman summarised,

There is no doubt that at one stage the Tahiti was overhauling the Greycliffe. The obligations on the pilot of the Tahiti and the master of the Greycliffe are clear. The overtaking boat is bound to keep out of the way and the boat overtaken is bound to maintain her course and speed unchanged.

It will be a matter for the Court to consider, and I think it will prove difficult to determine where the responsibility for the collision lies. But I might point out there are four alternatives; one or other of the boats may have been at fault, or both, or neither.

Though I trust that the Court before it is finished will be able to select one of these four, I myself approach the problem with a good deal of uncertainty, realising the difficult task before the Court.³

Holman suggested that in order to establish what had actually occurred and why – and who was at fault – it would be necessary to find answers to the following questions:

- When and where in Sydney Harbour did the collision occur?
- What was the cause of the collision?
- Was *Greycliffe* navigated in a proper and seamanlike manner?
- Was *Tahiti* navigated in a proper and seamanlike manner?
- What was the speed of each vessel shortly before and at the moment of the collision?
- Was the speed of either excessive under the circumstances?
- Did each vessel comply with the regulations for the prevention of collisions, or any special local rule for navigation in Port Jackson?
- If an answer was in the negative, which regulation was contravened and by which vessel?
- Was a good and proper lookout kept on each vessel?
- Was the collision caused or contributed to by any wrongful act or default of any persons, and if so, by whom?
- Were all proper and necessary steps taken by the master or person in charge of *Tahiti*?⁴

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Speed and Courses of the Vessels

Several witnesses were called before the Court over the ensuing days to attest to the speed at which *Tahiti* had been travelling. Whilst they witnessed her speed first hand, many also testified to having observed *Greycliffe* change her course. Witnesses included Garden Island Police Constables, a Navy Gunner, an Able Seaman, a Petty Officer and a Chief Petty Officer from the Royal Australian Navy, Masters of ferries and the Master of a tug.

Captain Geoffrey Clark, Master of the ferry *Burra-Bra*, told the court,

*I saw a change of course by the Greycliffe. She seemed to starboard her helm, altering her course to port a little. I should say about one point or one and a half.*⁵

Mr. Evans, representing Pilot Carson, cross-examined Clark. He was eager to show *Greycliffe's* turn to port was the reason for of the collision.

Evans: *Supposing the two ships had continued on their courses, if the Greycliffe had not altered her course, would they have been perfectly safe?*

Clark: *Yes, at that moment.*

Evans: *Would there have been any risk of collision?*

Clark: *No.*⁶

Mr. Holman questioned John Barry, an Able Seaman Gunner from H.M.A.S. *Success*, who had observed *Tahiti* under way and countered,

Barry: *I was watching the Tahiti – the speed she was going.*

Holman: *What speed was she travelling at?*

Barry: *12 or 14 knots.*

Holman: *Is it part of your training as a gunner to estimate speed?*

Barry: *Yes.*⁷

However, Barry went on to say he, too, saw *Greycliffe* alter her course to port, but observed no change in course by *Tahiti*. He demonstrated this using models of two ships provided in the courtroom.

The following day, Chief Petty Officer Bryant of H.M.A.S. *Success*, attested to the fact that he observed *Tahiti* doing about twelve knots as she passed Garden Island, but was unable to determine the speed of *Greycliffe*. He added that he had also seen a change in course effected by *Greycliffe*. He was asked to demonstrate his observations with the models, which he did with 'great care and deliberation'.⁸

Next on the stand was Petty Officer Halliwell, also from H.M.A.S. *Success*. He said he had seen *Greycliffe* leave the wharf at Garden Island and then watched *Tahiti* move down the harbour. 'She was belting up a good amount of smoke'⁹, he told the court, explaining that when he first sighted her she was doing eight or nine knots, but increased speed after passing Garden Island to about twelve knots. 'She seemed to be working up speed.'¹⁰

Joseph Kirkham, Chief Yeoman of Signals at Garden Island had been positioned in the Signal Station 110 feet above sea level, and had a clear view of the harbour. He

said that when *Greycliffe* left the Garden Island ferry wharf, *Tahiti* was still abreast of Fort Denison. By the time the latter passed Garden Island, he felt, she was doing twelve knots. However, he did not see the accident occur.

Leslie Blakeney, Master of the tug *Bimbi*, also judged *Tahiti*'s speed at twelve knots, but saw a gradual alteration in *Greycliffe*'s course toward *Tahiti*. He saw two puffs of steam from *Tahiti*'s siren, and then heard the two blasts a moment later. He could see a collision was imminent and could only watch as *Greycliffe* was struck. He saw her roll over and split in two, then hurried his boat to the scene as quickly as he could.

Thus far, all evidence had pointed to an excessive speed by *Tahiti* and a course alteration by *Greycliffe*. However, some conflicting evidence was also introduced. Firstly, one witness testified that *Tahiti* had changed course.

Tom King, a Leading Stoker from H.M.A.S. *Penguin*, attested to the fact that *Tahiti*, and not *Greycliffe*, changed course. He estimated *Tahiti* at thirteen knots on a parallel course with *Greycliffe*, but then, after passing Clark Island, *Tahiti* changed course to starboard, thus converging on *Greycliffe*. With the ship models, he demonstrated an angle of impact of some 30°.

Then another witness told the court neither vessel had changed course. Adrian Galjaard, a cook on H.M.A.S. *Success*, was called to the stand. He was on the jetty awaiting a ferry at the time of the accident and saw *Tahiti* pass at a speed he assumed to be between twelve and thirteen knots. 'The thing that struck me most', he said, 'was the huge bow wave of the *Tahiti*...' ¹¹ However, he added, neither vessel changed course.

A third witness said *Greycliffe* did not change course. Francis Whitehouse, an ex-seaman and passenger on the ferry *Woollahra*, told the court he was travelling from Nielsen Park to Circular Quay. When *Woollahra* passed *Tahiti* shortly before the accident, he remarked to a friend, 'She must have a bone in her teeth. She must be doing 12, perhaps 14, knots.' ¹² Under further questioning, Whitehouse said he saw no alteration in *Greycliffe*'s course. 'No', he said, 'she did not alter one point'. ¹³ He felt both vessels were on converging courses.

Finally, a fourth stated both vessels turned to port. Gilbert Snelson, an Able Seaman from H.M.A.S. *Success* testified how he saw *Tahiti* passing Garden Island at a speed of approximately twelve knots. He told the court, '...*Greycliffe* was slightly converging on the course of the *Tahiti*. Suddenly the *Greycliffe* turned to port. At the same time the *Tahiti* did likewise'. ¹⁴

There was little evidence for the first two of the above scenarios; no further witnesses could corroborate the statements, and it is probable their impression of what occurred was affected by their angles of vision. The fourth observation, however, that both vessels turned to port, may be correct insofar that in attempting evasive action, *Tahiti* may have been seen to turn to port, away from *Greycliffe*.

Though some of the evidence regarding *Greycliffe*'s turn varied, strong evidence weighed in the direction of a distinct change of course by that vessel. Within just three days, the court was presented with several different scenarios. However, the one fact that no-one had disputed was that *Tahiti* was doing a speed well in excess of the maximum allowed.

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An artist's impression *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe*'s paths, as seen from Steel Point (Nielsen Park).
In the background, the Harbour Bridge is still in an early stage of construction

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A bird's eye view of *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe*'s paths through Sydney Harbour. © John Brew

The wheelhouse of the Sydney ferry *Lady Scott* in 1969, with Captain Jack Gray at the helm. Although *Lady Scott* herself has nothing to do with the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* Disaster, this photo has been included to illustrate the poor view to the rear afforded by a wheelhouse of similar design to *Greycliffe*'s. The photograph is taken through the ferry's forward port window, and shows a door to the Captain's rear and a small rear starboard window

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The Pilot's Evidence

Eagerly anticipated, Pilot Carson was called to the stand on Monday, 21 November.

Initially asked about his experience as a Pilot, Thomas Carson told the court he had been employed by the N.S.W. Department of Navigation since 1909, and was a sea-going Master before that. He began as a Pilot in Sydney, where he spent two years, before transferring to Newcastle, N.S.W., in 1911. In 1923 he returned to Sydney where he had served as a Pilot ever since. He made a point of emphasising he piloted some 250 ships each year, and during his almost twenty years service had never had an accident.

Commencing his testimony, Carson carefully explained how he had departed Darling Harbour, rounded Miller's Point and proceeded down the Harbour at five knots. As he crossed the Quay, he routinely sounded the ship's horn. He sighted *Greycliffe* for the first time as they passed Bennelong Point. She was pulling out from Garden Island, several ships' lengths ahead.

As he approached Garden Island, launches full of workers crossed his bow. Carson had to port *Tahiti's* helm to enable them to cross safely, then straightened the ship's course again. His attention turned to *Greycliffe* again. She was on course for Shark Island, about two points off his starboard bow.

As she was already cruising at a good speed, *Tahiti* began to gain on *Greycliffe* rather rapidly because the latter was still building up speed after her departure from Garden Island. Carson estimated his speed at the time was approximately six to seven knots. However, within a short time, as *Greycliffe* gradually increased her speed, *Tahiti* ceased to gain on her. At about 4.25 p.m., the ferry was four points and a ships' length off *Tahiti's* bow.

Just abreast of Shark Island, Carson continued, *Tahiti* was doing eight knots. Suddenly, *Greycliffe* altered course toward him. He called out to Captain Aldwell, and then ordered the helm hard to starboard. Stopping both engines, he ordered the port engine full astern, then sounded two long blasts on *Tahiti's* horn.

Initially, he thought an accident could be avoided, but saw that *Greycliffe* continued her turn towards the liner unabated. Carson ordered both engines full astern, but at that point the two vessels collided at an angle of between 45-75 degrees. From *Greycliffe's* turn to the moment of impact, barely 45 seconds had lapsed; the collision was unavoidable.

Carson explained he then ordered both engines stopped, because he knew people would be in the water and feared injuring them further. The liner cruised through the debris and it was some time before he could stop her. Carson then turned the ship and boats were lowered.

Under questioning, Carson added that from his first sighting of *Greycliffe*, she was constantly under the observation of both himself and Captain Aldwell. Until the ferry turned towards *Tahiti*, he was not aware of any imminent danger.

Manning: *You knew at some stage [Greycliffe] would alter her port course fairly sharply for Nielsen Park?*

Carson: *Yes – but not nearly so sharply as she did.*

Manning: *The alteration of course which you suggest would be somewhere in the vicinity of Bradley's Head. That would be a long way out of his course?*

Carson: *Oh, yes.*¹⁵

Sydney Harbour Pilot, Captain Thomas Carson and his wife in Sydney, possibly leaving one of the trials. As the Pilot assigned to *Tahiti*'s 'harbour removal' on 3 November 1927, he was effectively in charge of *Tahiti* at the time of its collision with *Greycliffe*.

© Thomas Carson

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Carson was then quizzed on the speeds at which *Tahiti* was travelling during her short journey. He confirmed the ship was doing five to six knots after she left Darling Harbour. He ordered the engines to 'half ahead' near Bennelong Point and maintained this until he passed Garden Island. At this point, he ordered 'full ahead', which he maintained until the time of the collision.

Carson: *I was, however, not doing more than 8 knots.... There was nothing unusual passing Garden Island.*

Manning: *So there was nothing to cause the pontoon at Garden Island to rock as it never rocked before?*

Carson: *No. The pontoon always rocks. I was a little closer than usual...*¹⁶

Carson could suggest no reason why *Greycliffe* would alter course so unexpectedly unless, as had been previously suggested, there was a problem with her steering gear.

Judge Campbell concurred. 'The action taken by the *Greycliffe* was incomprehensible', he said. 'She had no right to be on that course at all.'¹⁷

The Ferry Master's Evidence

Captain William Barnes was called to the stand on 23 November to explain his version of the events.

He left Circular Quay, he attested, at 4.15 p.m., one minute behind schedule. He headed for Garden Island, where he arrived seven or eight minutes later. He remained at Garden Island between one-and-a-half and two minutes, then departed, ordering full speed.

*...[I] was then heading for north of Shark Island light, and continued on that course for about a minute. I then swung slightly to port, about a quarter of a point. I attributed this to the fall of the rudder and the wind. When I noticed this movement I steadied the vessel and continued on. I was standing on the starboard side of the wheelhouse against the telegraph when I heard two blasts. I looked over my shoulder through a window at the back of the wheelhouse. I did not see anything at all. I stepped to the port side of the wheelhouse and looked out. I then saw the bows of Tahiti right on my port quarter aft, only a few feet away.*¹⁸

He explained that no sooner had he stepped back to the wheel, he felt *Tahiti's* bow wave hit the ferry's rear port side. He took hold of the wheel pulled it to port, then felt the impact of steel against wood. The ferry then swung involuntarily to port, across the liner's bow.

Barnes was cross-examined by Mr. Evans for Pilot Carson.

Evans: *What was the speed of the Greycliffe?*

Barnes: *The Greycliffe was doing about 9 or 10 knots. She maintained that speed right up to the time of the impact.*

Evans: *For three-quarters of a minute before the impact you were holding the same position?*

Barnes: *Yes.*

Evans: *What course were you steering?*

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Barnes: *For the north of Shark Island light, but the wave from the Tahiti swung me into her.*¹⁹

Appearing on behalf of the Union Steamship Company, Dr. Brissenden took over.

Brissenden: *You don't suggest that the wave had anything to do with the collision?*

Barnes: *I suggest that the wave threw me right across the bow of the Tahiti.*

Brissenden: *What steps did you take to keep a proper lookout?*

Barnes: *I kept looking around my wheelhouse continuously.*

Brissenden: *Were you looking behind?*

Barnes: *No; I was not looking behind. Only in case I was going to alter my course I would look behind, or if I heard anything unusual.*²⁰

Mr. Evans resumed his attack:

Evans: *I put it to you that the port [aft wheelhouse] window was too dirty to look out of.*

Barnes: *I absolutely deny that.*²¹

Brissenden and Evans were hard on the Ferry Master. They put him under intense pressure in an effort to find a hole in his story.

He was questioned about his late departure from Circular Quay, whether he would be unpopular if he arrived late at Garden Island, and whether the naval ratings would be annoyed. Was he the regular Master? How well did he know his vessel? By how many inches did the wheel clear the floor? Did he know anything about the Sailing Directions of the coast of New South Wales?

It is highly debatable whether all the questions were relevant; they were intent on casting doubt on his testimony. Indeed, when questioned about his knowledge of charts, however, Barnes admitted he knew nothing about them, and could not even mark his course—a surprising reply from a ferry master. He refused to draw his course to Nielsen Park on a map, but stated he knew the course of deep sea steamers intersected with his.

He completed his testimony by confirming that *Greycliffe's* steering gear had peculiarities, but claimed this was 'no more erratic than that of any other ferry steamer'.²²

That day, two of *Greycliffe's* crew were also asked to give their versions of events, as were crew members of the ferry steamers *Kummula*, *Kurraba*, and *Woollahra*.

Field of View from the Ferry's Wheelhouse

Moving on to other areas of the investigation, Dr. Brissenden, appearing on behalf of the Union Steamship Company, called David Thomas Drake, son of *Greycliffe's* builder, to the stand.²³ In regard to the view available to the rear from the ferry's wheelhouse, he asked if the master's view would be hindered in any way. Drake testified it would not. The angle of vision from the wheelhouse was 45 degrees.

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However, under further questioning, he admitted that if the master wanted to see more than 45 degrees to port or starboard it would be necessary to use the side windows. He maintained the master could do this and control the vessel at the same time.

He surmised that, judging from the condition of various parts of the wreckage, *Tahiti* must have struck at an angle of 40-45 degrees, implying *Greycliffe's* master would have had a full, unhindered view of the approaching liner had he turned to look.

Chief Shipwright Surveyor for the Navigation Department, Captain Malcolm Halliday, agreed with these sentiments, adding however, that if a helmsman used the rear windows, he could look along the shade deck but not down to the water.²⁴

One Month Adjournment

The following day, Mr. Holman announced he had been instructed by the Commonwealth Director of Navigation to request an adjournment of the hearing until the return of *Tahiti* to Sydney at the end of December.

Holman explained the necessity of gathering more evidence from the ship's crew, specifically from those on the bridge and the Chief Engineer. He said it was of great importance, indeed in the public interest, that this evidence was brought before the court. He felt his duty to the public would not be properly performed unless this was done.

Initially sceptical, Justice Campbell finally agreed after consultation with his assessors, Captains Jolliffe and Lindbergh, and adjourned the Court until 28 December 1927.

Tahiti's Master Gives Evidence

On Christmas Eve, *Tahiti* arrived back in port for the first time since the collision. A nervous Pilot Richard Millington felt the eyes of Sydney upon him as he gingerly piloted the now infamous steamer up the harbour to her berth in Darling Harbour.

On 28 December, the Court was resumed and Captain Basil Aldwell was called to the stand. Eager to convince the court of his competency, Aldwell pointed out he had 22 years experience in steam and sail, and had never had an accident.

He then commenced his explanation of the events leading up to the collision, starting with *Tahiti's* departure from Darling Harbour just after 4.00 p.m. He testified *Tahiti* was following her usual course down the harbour at around four knots. Speed was increased to over five knots after passing Circular Quay, and then full speed ordered after passing Garden Island.

He first noticed *Greycliffe*, he said, when she was at the wharf at Garden Island. This was as his own vessel passed Fort Denison. Although *Tahiti* initially gained on her, this ceased as the ferry picked up speed after pulling away from the wharf. He considered her speed at roughly the same as *Tahiti's*, or at just under eight knots, and her course to be parallel with his.

A short while later an exclamation by Pilot Carson made him turn in time to see *Greycliffe* sharply altering her course towards *Tahiti*. He recalled the Pilot's orders to

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the engine room and helmsman, and told how he watched helplessly as the ferry disappeared under the liner's bow.

Mr. Manning, appearing for Sydney Ferries, quizzed Aldwell:

Manning: *If the two vessels had continued on parallel courses, what would have been the interval between them when they passed?*

Aldwell: *About 300 feet.*

Manning: *Was the pilot in a better position to judge distances than you?*

Aldwell: *No; we were both on the bridge.*

Manning: *In view of all the circumstances, do you consider a speed of 13 knots by the Tahiti dangerous?*

Aldwell: *We were not travelling at that speed. She never came up to eight knots.*

Manning: *What is her maximum speed?*

Aldwell: *It all depends upon conditions. Fifteen and a half knots is her maximum speed.*

Manning: *How long would it take you to reach maximum speed?*

Aldwell: *Sometimes the whole trip. On ordinary occasions we would take an hour or an hour and a half to reach full speed.*²⁵

Unless the boilers had been heated for several hours, he explained, it would be impossible for *Tahiti* to reach the twelve knots many had suggested *Tahiti* attained in the harbour.

When questioned on the liner's course, Aldwell replied that *Greycliffe* was running on a parallel course on their starboard side, whilst *Woollahra* was parallel, heading in the opposite direction, on their port side. At the same time, *Burra-Bra* was approaching from astern. Therefore, they could not move any further to port away from *Greycliffe*.

Describing the moment of collision, he told the court, 'The *Greycliffe* seemed to fall to pieces. She simply collapsed like a barrel. We felt no impact'.²⁶

Aldwell then came under a great deal of criticism for statements he made to Wellington Police upon his arrival in New Zealand, which contrasted with the evidence he was now giving before the court. He explained,

*I was taken unawares. I probably made a misstatement. I was a very tired man, having had 36 hours on the bridge. I did not want to give a statement until the next day. The police, however, insisted upon my doing so. There was no alternative.*²⁷

Aldwell reasoned his conflicting statements were merely a result of tiredness. By the time *Tahiti* arrived in Wellington at 6.00 a.m., he had not slept in one-and-a-half days, having had to remain the entire time on the bridge to navigate through thick fog.

Tahiti's officers and a number of the crew were also called to the stand to give short statements. Chief Engineer McMurrich explained that, at the time of the collision, one single-ended and three double-ended boilers were in use. Though not fully warmed up as they proceeded down the harbour, they were otherwise in proper working order. He stressed that 'full speed' did not indicate the maximum speed of the vessel.

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Quartermaster and Helmsman, Roderick McLeod, told the court he was steering under orders from the Pilot. He first saw *Greycliffe* when she was half a mile beyond Garden Island. Shortly before the collision, he saw *Greycliffe* alter her course to port about six or seven points and then cross *Tahiti*'s bow.

Angle of Impact

In an effort to ascertain the angle of impact between the two vessels, Naval Architect Alexander Greenlees was called to give evidence.

Having examined the portions of the ferry's remains beached by Taronga Park Wharf, Greenlees estimated the angle of impact was between 80 and 90 degrees.

He based this evaluation on a nine-foot cut in *Greycliffe*'s hull extending from the side, through the bulwarks and across the bottom where he believed *Tahiti* had struck her.

A second opinion was presented by Marine Surveyor David Gibson who had examined submerged portions of *Greycliffe*'s hull using a 1300-candlepower cinema light attached to a twenty-foot tube.

He, on the other hand, considered that the line of broken timbers indicated an angle of impact of 65 to 70 degrees.

Greycliffe's Rudder

Questioning was then directed towards the condition and operation of *Greycliffe*'s rudder. Evidence had already suggested there was slackness in the chains, which allowed the ferry to veer to port.

Robert Kay, caretaker of the Naval Sportsground at Rose Bay, related his experience upon boarding *Greycliffe* at Circular Quay some three weeks prior to the accident, in order to travel to Garden Island.

The ferry departed the Quay but had barely travelled 100 yards when she stopped and returned to the wharf. Seated on the lower deck and facing the wharf, he observed the ferry's Master [It was not William Barnes] examining the stern.

The Master then left the wharf and returned some twenty minutes later with another man. Together they inspected the vessel, which was followed by several minutes of trials whereby *Greycliffe* was moved backwards and forwards a number of times within the Quay.

Apparently satisfied with the operation, *Greycliffe* then resumed her course for Garden Island, where Kay alighted. Kay returned to the Quay with *Greycliffe* again later that afternoon. He noticed nothing unusual, except that she was still running late.

Francis Ludeke, Superintendent for the Watsons Bay service of Sydney Ferries, was called to the stand to report on another incident with the ferry's rudder, which had occurred the previous August.

Just as in the situation related by Kay, *Greycliffe* left the Quay and had only gone a short distance when the Master noticed the rudder malfunctioning. He immediately took the ferry back to the Quay but, after examination, she continued her journey. However, before she departed, the vessel was turned around so the rudder at the opposite end could be used.

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By the time *Greycliffe* returned to Circular Quay from Watsons Bay, another ferry had been obtained to replace her, and she was taken out of service for a full inspection. Later analysis showed the pin on the defective rudder had broken and needed replacement.

Entering its final stages, the Court of Marine Enquiry was adjourned over the New Year, and counsel was called to commence closing statements from 3 January 1928.

Counsel Sums Up

Mr. Manning, representing Sydney Ferries, began his closing address to the Court by admitting *Greycliffe's* crew was at no time looking astern. They were all engaged in their various jobs at the time, he said, and this made them poor witnesses to the events immediately preceding the collision.

However, he went on, the crew of *Tahiti*, including the pilot, were looking forward and would have seen all the events unfold before them. This, he felt, cast doubt on their evidence and their conduct.

One would imagine that those men would have their eyes glued on the events before them and that we would be able to accept from them the most minute details of the incidents leading up to the collision. [However,] it is also for the Court to determine whether, as the result of their conduct... they can be regarded as reliable witnesses.²⁸

Manning felt the Court had three main questions to consider - 1. The relative positions of both vessels, 2. The intention of the Pilot of *Tahiti*, and 3. The speed of *Tahiti*.

Manning weighed the evidence of various witnesses regarding the vessels' positions. He indicated there were great inconsistencies between estimates given by independent eyewitnesses and the crew of *Tahiti*.

Criticising the Pilot, Manning stated his evidence was 'in most serious conflict with all the other evidence'.²⁹ Was he intending to pass *Greycliffe* or not? During the course of proceedings he had contradicted his own statements.

Bound by regulations to do everything in his power to avoid risk of collision, he said he instead adopted the attitude, 'I will do nothing. I will go as close to her as I like. She has to look out for herself'.³⁰

He discredited statements made by *Tahiti's* crew regarding the liner's speed down the harbour and at the point of impact, claiming evidence clearly showed her true speed to have been approximately twelve to thirteen knots.

On the other hand, Manning said, the evidence given by Captain Barnes of *Greycliffe* remained consistent and did not change under 'dramatic' questioning and cross-examination. The same, he felt, could not be said of *Tahiti's* crew. If their story were true, it would be 'one of the most amazing episodes in the history of navigation'.³¹

In Barnes' defence, Manning added,

Either Captain Barnes was mad, or he did something that was inexplicable; chased the Tahiti around the Harbour, and put himself in a position that his vessel would certainly be sunk. There was nothing wrong with the steering gear. Therefore, why this suicidal act on his part? The answer is that he never got across there at all.³²

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In conclusion, he argued that Carson and Aldwell's evidence could not be seriously considered. They were merely trying to exonerate themselves and destroy Barnes' reputation.

Dr. Brissenden, counsel for the Union Steamship Company, began his closing arguments on 4 January 1928.

He considered that evidence obtained from those involved would probably be less reliable than that which was obtained from observers. As everything had happened so fast, it would be asking too much to expect their evidence to be perfectly accurate.

He recognised that evidence given by some witnesses was of greater value than that given by other others, but felt none could be considered deliberately false. Under such circumstances, he felt, human nature is prone to error and accurate observation almost impossible. Whilst considering the speed of the two vessels, for example, he said that

...several remarkable statements [were] made which were the effect of either imagination which knew no bounds or scientific deduction, which amounted to the same thing. Both led to results quite incredible.³³

Brissenden turned his attention to timings, adding that it was difficult to ascertain with any certainty the exact times of each event in the episode.

However, basing times on the clocks at Circular Quay, he calculated the average speed of *Greycliffe* could have been no more than 6.4 knots and that of *Tahiti* at no more than 7.4 knots. He mocked suggestions that *Tahiti* travelled at a speed of thirteen knots, finding it was not supported by real evidence.

Countering, he suggested that if the case for *Greycliffe* were indeed true, it would be tantamount to murder by Aldwell and Carson, or 'a case of such absolute disregard of sailing directions as to amount to manslaughter'.³⁴ He insisted, however, that evidence clearly showed *Tahiti* was travelling on her usual course at her usual speed, with both Master and Pilot on lookout.

The onus, he felt, was just as much upon *Greycliffe*'s master to keep a lookout – both ahead and astern. That he was not paying attention to traffic to his rear, he added, was proven by the fact he did not see *Tahiti* behind him when he left the wharf at Garden Island. Barnes had himself admitted he had not looked astern. He explained, 'I simply want to draw attention to the relative states of attention of the men in charge of the two vessels – one was keeping watch, the other was not'.³⁵

Brissenden refuted the evidence put forward by Captain Barnes, saying,

I ask the Court to come to the finding that the collision was due to the neglect of the master of the Greycliffe in not keeping a good lookout, and starboarding his helm across the bow of the Tahiti in a direction which he was not warranted to go by any manoeuvre he was likely to carry out or was carrying out.³⁶

Mr. Evans, representing Pilot Carson, began his closing argument stating that Pilot Carson's evidence 'from start to finish was right throughout and without a fault'.³⁷ Evans denied that *Tahiti*'s speed was in excess of regulations, saying,

This case, from the outset, has been prejudiced on the question of speeds. My friend, Mr. Holman, representing the Crown, accepts statements from witnesses without the

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smallest mathematical scrutiny, in spite of the fact that he has a technical staff behind him.

Everybody assumes that the speed of the Tahiti was excessive, so much so that I find it difficult to discredit this propaganda.

...I am quite sure [Holman] will... do what he can to restore the reputation of my client, which has been grossly defamed on this question, defamed in a process quite unpardonable...³⁸

Evans discussed evidence presented during the case, which he felt clearly indicated equipment on *Greycliffe* was faulty, thus making her unseaworthy.

Furthermore, he found two separate faults in Captain Barnes' actions; firstly, his alteration in course just before the collision without checking it was safe to do so, and, secondly, his failure to appreciate the ramifications. In closing Evans stated of Pilot Carson,

Fate has dealt my client a very cruel blow. It has made him the innocent instrument of an appalling disaster.

He resides, by the necessity of his avocation, in a district which is greatly bereaved in many homes. The notoriety attaching to him and his family is a curiously cruel one.

We know that suffering is the lot of a man, and he may bear it with what fortitude he can muster, but I submit to the Court that you will exonerate him in terms so explicit that not even the most prejudiced and emotional person can mistake what the cause was and his part in it.³⁹

Mr. Holman, KC, representing the State Navigation Department, was next to address the Court. Focussing on the subject of the speed of the two vessels, Holman applied evidence given by the Naval Police stationed on Garden Island, which clearly showed *Greycliffe* was doing approximately nine knots.

In *Tahiti's* case, he said, her average speed over the whole distance from Darling Harbour to the point of collision was 7.6 knots. However, he added, it was also clear her speed was steadily increasing during the final minutes before the accident. He judged the speed at the time of impact to be approximately twelve to thirteen knots.

Turning his attention to *Greycliffe's* Captain, Holman recalled how Barnes testified he was unconscious of any change of course by his vessel, and the first indication he had was when he heard the blasts of *Tahiti's* whistle.

However, he said, witnesses on Garden Island stated they had seen a definite change of course by the ferry. He therefore concluded there were only two possibilities—either that Captain Barnes did indeed make a voluntary change of course, or that a change occurred due to wave pressure from *Tahiti*.

Holman: *Unless there was such a change [of course by Greycliffe] the Court would have to assume that the Tahiti deliberately ran the Greycliffe down.*

Campbell: *I cannot assume that!⁴⁰*

As the final counsel completed his summary of the case, Judge Campbell closed the proceedings and announced his intention to deliver his findings the following day, Saturday, 7 January 1928.

The Judge's Findings

There was great public interest in the outcome of the enquiry, and many people appeared at the courthouse to hear Justice Campbell deliver his judgement; the courtroom was overflowing with an enthusiastic crowd, which included families of the victims and representatives from the media.

Campbell opened by stating that whilst a large spectrum of evidence had been presented, he would only refer to evidence directly relevant to the questions before the Court [listed previously in this chapter] and pertaining to the situation from the time *Tahiti* passed Fort Denison and *Greycliffe* left the wharf at Garden Island.

He recognised the inconsistency between statements given by different witnesses, but felt this resulted from different locations and angles of observation, rather than dishonesty on the part of any person. Making an allowance for this, he said, '...there exists a residue of definite and dependable evidence from which certain conclusions may be safely drawn'.⁴¹

Weighing the evidence, Campbell came to four clear conclusions.

1. In relation to *Greycliffe*, *Tahiti* was effectively the overtaking vessel from abreast of Garden Island to the site at which the collision occurred. *Tahiti* was therefore subject to Article 24 of the Statutory Rules of 1923, No. 100. The vessel was in breach of this rule as she failed to keep out of the way of *Greycliffe*. This, he felt, was the ultimate cause of the collision.
2. He was also unable to accept the evidence of Pilot Carson and *Tahiti's* crew that *Greycliffe* made a sudden swing to port across the liner's bow. No person had been able to suggest a reason for such a course alteration and Captain Barnes had flatly denied it had occurred at all.
3. In reference to the relative positions of the two vessels immediately prior to the collision, Campbell concluded this 'was a result of normal progression upon their ordinary courses'.⁴² He found, however, that the Master of *Greycliffe* was 'clearly totally ignorant of this, and of the proximity of the *Tahiti*'.⁴³

Though not exonerating Captain Barnes, he completely rejected the notion that a turn had taken place, adding,

*But those in control of the Tahiti, having the Greycliffe in full view, should have been aware of it, but apparently were not, and a momentary inattention to the Greycliffe when the Woollahra was passing to port afforded just sufficient time to turn the potential danger into an imminent deadly peril...*⁴⁴

Campbell felt this was the most likely scenario, based on the evidence, rather than that a sane man unexpectedly and inexplicably altered *Greycliffe's* course to port and put the ferry across *Tahiti's* bow.

4. Regarding the general courses of the two vessels, Campbell found that from the time *Greycliffe* left Garden Island, they were slightly converging. He could not, however, determine with any accuracy the angle of the convergence.

Campbell concluded it was impossible to estimate the exact speed of the two vessels, but felt evidence had left no doubt the speed of *Tahiti* just prior to the collision was in excess of that which was allowed by regulations.

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Judging by the fact *Tahiti* was moving faster than *Greycliffe*, and based on evidence that *Greycliffe* was doing approximately ten knots, he suggested the liner's speed to have been around twelve knots at the time of impact.

Campbell determined there was no evidence to suggest Captain Barnes had breached any rule of harbour navigation. In his opinion, Barnes neither caused the collision nor was he culpable for the fact he did not look astern. He felt he rightly assumed he was faster than any other vessel to his rear, and knew such vessels had a responsibility to keep clear of him. In closing, he added,

It would be judging a man by a very artificial and exacting standard to hold him guilty of culpable negligence for [thinking it was unnecessary to check to the rear before altering course], particularly when that view appears to be generally accepted, and in the special circumstances I refuse to draw the inference against him.⁴⁵

The proceedings were thereby closed and the exhibits were made available to the Coroner for the ongoing enquiry in that court. The Judge's decision was final, as the Navigation Act made no provision for appeals to be heard against the findings of a Court of Marine Enquiry.

On Monday, 9 January 1928, the headlines of Sydney's newspapers announced the verdict: *Tahiti's* pilot was to blame and the ferry master was not culpable.

Directed to take leave straight after the accident, Captain Carson had not worked a day since 3 November 1927. Now, as an immediate consequence of the findings, State Superintendent of Navigation, Captain Morris, suspended Carson from duty. He was found guilty of breaching Article 24 of the Collision Regulations⁴⁶ and of exceeding the speed limit set by Sydney Harbour Trust Regulation 43.⁴⁷

Analysing the Findings

Campbell clearly accepted evidence from witnesses that *Tahiti* was exceeding the speed limit. Although it was impossible to ascertain the exact speed she was doing with any real certainty, it became an accepted fact that *Tahiti* was travelling above the speed limit for that part of the harbour. Furthermore, he accepted the evidence that the two vessels were on converging courses. These two facets of the accident can be accepted as very probably what really occurred; they were also accepted as fact in the ensuing courts.

In contrast, however, Campbell refused to accept that *Greycliffe* had made a turn to port across *Tahiti's* bow. She was due to make a turn to port to put her on course for Nielsen Park, but the turn referred to during the trial was one which was alleged to have occurred much earlier than was necessary or expected, still west of Bradleys Head.

Strangely, Campbell in fact contradicted himself when he initially accepted evidence that the turn had indeed taken place. When Pilot Carson was called to the stand to tell his version of events, he explained how he saw *Greycliffe* make an unexpected turn which brought her across *Tahiti's* bow. Campbell retorted, 'The action taken by the *Greycliffe* was incomprehensible. She had no right to be on that course at all'. Surprisingly, however, in summing up only weeks later, he made a conflicting conclusion and refused to accept *Greycliffe* had effected any such turn. In retrospect, maybe he should not have made his original statement at all!

❧ The Court of Marine Enquiry ❧

It is also interesting to note that many of the witnesses who testified to *Tahiti's* excessive speed, and to the fact that the courses of both vessels were converging, were also the very same witnesses who testified a turn to port by *Greycliffe* took place. The question must be asked why parts of the evidence given by particular witnesses was accepted as fact, whereas other parts were not. This suggests his acceptance of evidence may have been somewhat selective, and casts some doubt on the judge's credibility.

Even if one were to suggest Captain Aldwell's and Pilot Carson's evidence might be biased, there were several independent, reliable witnesses who said *Greycliffe* had made the alleged turn. Amongst these were Able Seaman Gunner John Barry and Chief Petty Officer William Bryant of H.M.A.S. *Success*, and Captain Leslie Blakeney, Master of the tug *Bimbi*. Not only did these three gentlemen testify to *Tahiti's* speed, but they also said they saw *Greycliffe* turn to port. The implication is that, whilst their 'speed evidence' was accepted as fact, their 'turn evidence' was not. Other witnesses, who, one could imagine, might side with a fellow ferryman, such as Captain Geoffrey Clark, Master of the ferry *Burra-Bra*, and Rupert Nixon, the same ferry's helmsman, also both attested they had seen *Greycliffe* make a distinct turn to port.

In principle, there is no more evidence for *Tahiti's* speed than there is for *Greycliffe's* turn. Both came from statements made by eyewitnesses, so why was evidence for *Tahiti's* speed accepted, whilst that for *Greycliffe's* turn was not?

If we are to accept the evidence given by the above gentlemen, that *Greycliffe* had indeed made a turn towards *Tahiti*, the next question which must be asked is 'why?'. And was it done consciously or otherwise? There is certainly sense in Campbell's statement, that it was unlikely that an 'apparently sane man' purposely altered *Greycliffe's* course to port, knowingly putting his life and those of his crew and passengers in danger. This act would be tantamount to suicide. Therefore, this possibility can be ruled out with relative certainty.

The inference, then, must be that it was involuntary or accidental. But this leaves us two further options: that Barnes was either not paying attention to his route, or there was a problem with the steering gear which took *Greycliffe* off course. However, this latter option amounts to the same thing as the former if Barnes did not realise there had been a deviation from course. Both justify a conclusion that Barnes was negligent.

Barnes had already admitted he had corrected his course on one occasion between Garden Island and the point where the accident occurred. He felt an alteration in his course, which he attributed to slackness in the chains to the rudder, and made a correction for it. Had the ferry in fact veered further from course than Barnes had assumed, or did the 'fall' to port recommence after Barnes' correction?

If the slackness in the chains was the instigator, it would explain Barnes' steadfast denial he had consciously or physically made a turn. However, if he was indeed off course, why did he not notice he was? It occurred in broad daylight and the view from the wheelhouse was unhindered and clear. How could Barnes not have noticed his changed course? There were no navigational instruments available in the wheelhouse, except the helmsman's eyes. They were his compass, and he failed to properly navigate a trip he made several times per day.

Why did Campbell so easily discard this vital fact? His summation of Barnes' actions, therefore, equated to this: 'The Captain could not have made a voluntary turn

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

to port, and refuted that it occurred at all. Moreover, nobody could suggest a reason for such a turn; therefore it did not take place.'

This finding makes no sense. Independent witnesses observed a clear change in the ferry's course and, in addition, Barnes had himself admitted he had corrected his course during the journey as the vessel had veered to port. When Carson was asked why he thought the deviation was made, he replied he could find no reason but for the [admitted] slackness in the chains. Yet Campbell clearly stated no-one had offered a reason why an unscheduled turn could have taken place.

It was an unusual conclusion for Campbell to make; it contradicted the evidence. To ignore evidence of the malfunction of a vital piece of equipment on the same trip, just minutes before the collision, is incomprehensible. Incredibly, this was surpassed by his further conclusion, that a turn therefore never occurred at all. Thus, having found there was no turn, he had only one option – to find *Tahiti* [that is, *Tahiti's* pilot] at fault for not keeping out of the way of the ferry. And this is what Campbell recorded as the cause of the collision.

The ferry S.S. *Vaucluse* departing Nielsen Park wharf. During the Coronial Inquest, comparisons were made with other ferries on the harbour that had wheelhouses of similar design to *Greycliffe*, such as *Vaucluse*, as it was found there was no exact replica of *Greycliffe* in service.

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❧ *The Coronial Inquest, 1927-28* ❧

CHARGED with enquiring into the deaths of those lost in the accident was 60-year-old State Coroner, Harry Ferdinand William Fletcher.

A Coronial Inquest was necessary as not only were the victims considered to have died sudden and unnatural deaths, but further, strictly speaking, the causes of their deaths remained to be formally established. It was Fletcher's responsibility to determine these facts.

His objectives were slightly different to those of the Marine Court, however, in that he was only required to confirm the identity of each victim and to ascertain the time, place and cause of their deaths. Although he could refer any matter further, if he felt a criminal offence had been committed or if he considered laws or regulations should be altered to prevent similar future incidents, he had no power to extend his hearing to such issues.

Although a State Coroner, his jurisdiction extended beyond the New South Wales border in so far that, whilst most of *Greycliffe's* victims were residents of the State, several were not. It was his duty, however, to enquire into all deaths, as they had occurred within his area of authority.

When the Coronial Inquest opened on 9 November 1927, it unintentionally commenced on the same day as Justice James Campbell's Court of Marine Enquiry. This coincidence would create great problems for Fletcher. Although his Inquest actually began earlier in the day than the Marine Court, he found his Coronial Court brusquely thrust to one side, the other court taking precedence over both evidence and witnesses.

Much to his frustration, Coroner Fletcher soon saw the consequences of concurrent hearings on the same incident in two different courts. Almost identical evidence and witnesses were required in both, but his access to them was continually delayed or frustrated. He concluded that, if he were to satisfactorily complete his enquiry, it would be necessary for him to adjourn proceedings until the Marine Court was complete. As a result, the Coronial Inquest was not finalised until 7 February 1928, a full month after the conclusion of the Marine Court.

In his opening statement on 9 November 1927, Mr. W. J. Creagh, representing the Union Steamship Company and officers of *Tahiti*, stated he wished to publicly express the company's 'extreme regret'. Mr. H. E. Manning, appearing on behalf of Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the master of *Greycliffe*, and Mr. F. P. Evans, appearing on behalf of the Pilot Carson, concurred with his sentiments.¹

Establishing the Facts

Government Medical Officer, Doctor Arthur A. Palmer, was called to give evidence on the bodies thus far recovered. He confirmed his examination of these 25 victims and found their causes of death in all but two cases to be drowning. The two exceptions were Margery Giraud and Mabel Carroll, where deep lacerations to the head and body were judged the major causes of death.

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Subsequently, Doctors James and MacMahon of Sydney Hospital testified that two semi-conscious survivors, Elsie Ramsay and Martha Williams, had been admitted to the hospital on 3 November. However, the two women did not recover and died later that same evening.

Setting the scene of the accident, Sergeant William Shakespeare of the Water Police explained he had been patrolling the Harbour at the time of the disaster, and was travelling from Clifton Gardens to Circular Quay. He came around Bradleys Head to see the scene immediately after the accident occurred, noting great amounts of wreckage and many people in the water.

He hurried to the site and was immediately able to retrieve eleven survivors from the water, and the body of James Treadgold. He brought the injured to Circular Quay, and then returned to the scene to continue the search. He was unable to find more bodies but remained on the scene into the evening, and during the ensuing days' recovery operations.

An Eyewitness Account

Alfred Comyns, a retired detective of the Natal Police and passenger on board S.S. *Woollahra*, enroute from Watsons Bay, was called to give an eyewitness account of the accident. He explained,

...we were between Nielsen Park and Garden Island, and standing out towards the Zoo. I should say we were 800 or 900 yards from Bradley's Head. We were a boat's length past the Greycliffe when the collision occurred.

The Greycliffe did not appear to alter her speed or course from the time I saw her bearing to the left. I heard a short blast. Then the Tahiti seemed to bump her a little. The Tahiti struck her more than half way forward and pushed her away.

The Tahiti struck her again, about midships, and swung the Greycliffe round on our side. The bow of the Tahiti was then hard against the Greycliffe, rolling her over. The Greycliffe was then heading towards us. We were 250 yards beyond the Tahiti then.

The Greycliffe turned completely over. She seemed to stand on her end and sank, stern first, in 20 seconds. She was not half-way along the left side of the Tahiti when she went down.²

It had taken the entire first day just to establish the circumstances surrounding the accident and place it in some context. The Inquest was then adjourned until the following Tuesday, 15 November.

Tahiti's First Officer's Statement

Upon resumption of the hearing, Coroner Fletcher attempted to assess the speed both vessels were travelling at the time of impact. He called for *Tahiti's* logbook to be produced.

It was established that *Tahiti* was running at half speed at 4.20 p.m. and then, a little after 4.24 p.m., the order was given to increase to full speed. *Tahiti's* First Officer, New Zealander Cecil Sharpe, who was stationed in the vessel's forecabin at the time,

❧ The Coronial Inquest ❧

explained the ship was running on her usual course. He estimated *Tahiti* was doing at about seven knots at the time of the accident.

He explained how he had been in the rear of the forecastle, when he heard shouting. Hurrying forward, he felt the first impact. He peered over the bow in time to see *Greycliffe* broadside to *Tahiti*, then watched powerlessly as the ferry rolled over. He felt the engines shudder as they were placed into reverse and hurried to give orders to lower the boats.

Sharpe was asked to demonstrate with models on a map of Port Jackson where the ships were in relation to each other, and questioned about their courses. He debated the fact that they were converging upon one another, but was unsure of how rapidly *Tahiti* was gaining on *Greycliffe*. Further, he could not remember hearing any blasts of the horn, nor any orders given from the bridge.

However, Sharpe was the only member of *Tahiti*'s crew in Sydney for the hearing and the vessel would not return until 24 December; it would be another five weeks before any further evidence could be taken from the ship's crew.

Conflict with the Court of Marine Enquiry

Counsel for Pilot Carson, Mr. Evans, complained to Coroner Fletcher of the difficulty of preparation for and appearance in two simultaneous courts. Supporting his argument, Mr. Creagh, for the Union Steamship Company, contended it would be unfair to expect witnesses to have to scramble from one court to the next to make statements. He urged Fletcher to postpone proceedings: 'I suggest strongly, that beyond identification this inquiry might very well stand over until the other has been held'.³

Indeed, the rest of the day was spent only taking evidence from almost thirty witnesses regarding the identities of the victims.

By the end of the session, Fletcher had reviewed Evans and Creagh's arguments. He concluded it would indeed serve the Court's interest to adjourn the Inquest for a short period. Allowing the Marine Court to proceed unhindered, he determined to reconvene the hearing on 28 December, which additionally allowed for *Tahiti*'s return to Sydney.

Ironically, however, only days later the Marine Court called its own adjournment until 28 December, also intending to await *Tahiti*'s return.

The Inquest Resumes

Not surprisingly, when the two Courts recommenced a few days after Christmas, there was an immediate clash. *Tahiti* had arrived in port on 24 December, but it was already 28 December and she was scheduled to depart again the next day. Both courts had subpoenaed *Tahiti*'s officers to appear that day – and both expected to see them.

When the Coroner's Inquest reopened at 10.00 a.m., Fletcher called the names of *Tahiti*'s Master, Helmsman, Second and Third Officers, and Chief and Second Engineers. However, much to his frustration, as one name after another was announced, it was greeted with silence. Demanding answers, he was outraged to learn the Marine Court had again robbed him of his witnesses.

Trying to placate him, counsel suggested the problem could easily be overcome if the Coroner were to accept evidence given by *Tahiti*'s officers before the Marine Court.

Understandably, Fletcher flatly refused. He threatened not only to penalise the officers, but also to detain them in Sydney, thus delaying the liner's departure.

It infuriated Fletcher to subsequently discover that not only had Justice Campbell refused a short adjournment of his own Court to allow counsel and witnesses to attend his coronial inquest, but he had also inconsiderately given *Tahiti's* officers his permission to leave Sydney on schedule the following day, without the slightest regard for the Coronal Inquest.

It was quite obvious that it would be impossible to question the crew that day and, frustrated by the apparent arrogance of the Marine Court, Fletcher unwillingly adjourned his court for the rest of the day. Once again, the Marine Court had taken precedence.

Tahiti's Officers Give Evidence

When the Inquest resumed the following morning, Fletcher was pleased to finally find his witnesses in the courtroom. The seven subpoenaed members of *Tahiti's* crew were present and prepared to be called to the stand.

First on the stand was Frederick Hudson, *Tahiti's* carpenter. He testified to initially having seen *Greycliffe* when she was a length-and-a-half ahead of *Tahiti*. She was on a parallel course, approximately 80 feet to starboard. At the same time, he said, *Tahiti* maintained a speed of approximately eight knots.

Five minutes later, he saw *Greycliffe* again, but this time she was across *Tahiti's* bow on an angle of approximately 45 degrees. He was a first-hand witness as the ferry split in two and disappeared down each side of *Tahiti's* bow.

Captain Aldwell then replaced Hudson on the stand, and practically repeated the statements he had made only the previous day before the Court of Marine Enquiry. Again, he was questioned about the conflicting statements he had given Wellington Police upon the vessel's arrival in that port.

Fletcher: *Why was that?*

Aldwell: *I did not want to give the evidence, but I had to it.*

Fletcher: *The statements were not accurate?*

Aldwell: *They were inaccurate. I said that the Greycliffe was three or four cables away, whereas she was three or four points on the starboard side. I may say I was not in a fit state to make the statements. I was half asleep.⁴*

Coroner Fletcher pressed Aldwell, however, to be sure there were no other factors influencing anyone's behaviour.

Fletcher: *I do not want to be offensive in any way, but... were you sober?*

Aldwell: *Yes, I do not take liquor.*

Fletcher: *Had Pilot Carson to your knowledge had any intoxicating liquor that day?*

Aldwell: *No.*

Fletcher: *Was Mr. Sharpe, the Chief Officer, quite sober?*

❧ The Coronial Inquest ❧

Aldwell: Yes.⁵

Questioned on the speed *Tahiti* was doing in Sydney Harbour, Aldwell claimed the vessel never exceeded eight knots. He believed that, merely by glancing at the water, he could tell within a knot what speed a vessel was doing. If the speed was excessive, he added, he would have definitely overruled the Pilot and ordered a reduction in speed.

Under cross-examination, he reiterated his confidence in Pilot Carson. Although, as Captain of the vessel, he had the power to take back charge in an emergency, he did not exercise his right; he felt Carson had the situation under control and his interference would only have made the situation more difficult in the few seconds available for evasive action.

Similar statements to those given the previous day before the Marine Court were also made by *Tahiti's* Second Officer Gibson, Third Officer Litchfield, Chief Engineer McMurrich, Second Engineer Thompson, and finally by Helmsman McLeod.

One by one, as *Tahiti's* officers finalised their evidence, they were released from the court. They scrambled back to the vessel to prepare for that afternoon's scheduled departure for Wellington and San Francisco. However, the questioning and cross-examinations took longer than expected, and the final man did not return to the ship until shortly before 5.30 p.m.

Much to the frustration of both passengers and crew, who were left no choice but to wait, *Tahiti* finally departed Sydney one-and-a-half hours behind schedule.

At the close of proceedings that day, Fletcher adjourned the hearing until 9 January 1928, allowing for a break over New Year, and sufficient time for the imminent completion of the Court of Marine Enquiry.

Port and State Navigation Regulations

Reopening his inquest after the ten-day break, Fletcher called the Acting Harbour Master at the time of the accident, and otherwise Assistant Harbour Master, Captain Cevers Hildebrand, to the stand to clarify questions regarding Port and State navigation regulations. In his sixties, the Irishman had spent over 45 years at sea. He held a Master's Certificate, a Marine Surveyor's Certificate, and a Pilotage Exemption Certificate for Port Jackson.

Armed with copies of the relevant navigation regulations, Hildebrand explained Department of Navigation officers were stationed on Sydney's wharves to record the arrival and departure times of seagoing vessels. The Department had, however, no means of policing such vessels' speeds within the harbour. Nonetheless, he said, officers were on constant lookout; should the speed of a vessel be considered excessive, the navigator would always be cautioned.

On the day of the collision, Hildebrand was not on the Harbour as he was up the Parramatta River on other business. He therefore had no opportunity to personally judge the speed at which *Tahiti* was travelling.

Fletcher: *Have you received any complaints about the speed of the Tahiti?*

Hildebrand: *No, I have not seen any.*⁶

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Indeed, added Hildebrand, *Tahiti* had never been reported for excessive speed. He felt, had it been the case on the day of the accident, a report would have been received either from officers of the Navigation Department or the Water Police, so action could be taken. However, none was recorded.

Hildebrand told the court that navigation regulations were based on international convention. Although special conditions could be added on a local level, the regulations themselves could not be amended. However, some regulations had become obsolete, as they were originally made for sailing vessels. Although a new edition of the regulations was in preparation, it had not yet been released. He suggested it was perhaps for this reason the regulations were often not followed.

Fletcher: *Are the sailing directions for outward-bound vessels usually followed?*

Hildebrand: *I cannot say they are. More often they are not.*

Fletcher: *Does the Harbour Trust take any notice of the sailing directions to see that they are obeyed?*

Hildebrand: *No.*

Fletcher: *They are more honoured in the breach than in the observance?*

Hildebrand: *Yes.*⁷

When he admitted he personally never used the State-issued regulations for coastal navigation, the incredulous counsel for the Union Steamship Company shot back:

Brissenden: *You are prepared to tell the world that masters of vessels need not worry about these State sailing directions?*

Hildebrand: *No; I am not prepared to do that. I myself simply don't observe them.*⁸

In fact, under cross-examination a few days later, Captain Geoffrey Clark, master of the ferry *Burra-Bra*, went one step further. The following is taken somewhat out of context, but the sentiment is the same.

Clark: *If I was to follow the Sydney Harbour regulations I would have a collision every day.*

Fletcher: *You mean if you comply with the regulations?*

Clark: *Yes; if I stick deliberately to them.*

Evans: *And you break the regulations deliberately?*

Clark: *Certainly...*⁹

Even *Greycliffe's* master, William Barnes, admitted this was the case. He concurred; regulations were broken on a regular basis by all manner of craft—coasters, ferries, and sea-going vessels.

This highlighted a major disparity between theory and practice when it came to navigating the harbour. It appeared the loose interpretation of the regulations by masters of vessels stood in stark contrast to the intentions and expectations of its authors. More than a poor interpretation, it was a blatant—and apparently condoned—disregard for the rules.

❧ The Coronial Inquest ❧

By 11 January 1928, of 140 subpoenaed witnesses, only 60 had given evidence. Coroner Fletcher estimated questioning the remaining 80 people would require a further three to four weeks.

Tahiti's Speed

A crucial point of contention in both the Court of Marine Enquiry and the Coronial Inquest was the speed of both vessels, particularly that of *Tahiti*. Although estimations of the liner's speed varied from witness to witness, with the exception of few others besides *Tahiti's* crew, statements generally indicated a speed far in excess of that which was permitted by the regulations.

Greycliffe's deckhand and sometime helmsman, Frederick Jones, was the first to testify in this series of questioning. Gauging by the fact *Greycliffe* could manage a maximum speed of ten knots, he considered *Tahiti's* approximate speed at the time of the collision to have been an incredible fifteen knots. This was by far the greatest estimate of speed attributed to the ship immediately before the accident.

A succession of witnesses followed over the ensuing two weeks to give their opinions of *Tahiti's* speed. These people were almost entirely the same as those who had appeared before the Marine Court to answer the same question.

Most placed *Tahiti's* speed at between twelve and thirteen knots, but the rare witness refuted this. One such person was Captain William Chaplin, Master of the steamer *Jervis Bay*, a larger vessel, but similar in both design and speed to *Tahiti*.

Replying to questions posed by counsel for Sydney Ferries, Mr. Manning, the 39-year-old Master Mariner testified it would be impossible to attain a speed of twelve to thirteen knots on such a short stretch to Bradleys Head. In fact, it took *Jervis Bay* two to three miles to attain such a speed, and up to two hours to attain full speed. By Bradleys Head, his vessel had usually built up a speed of no more than about eight knots.

Under cross-examination by Mr. Evans for Pilot Carson, Chaplin said he knew Carson from his voyages to and from Sydney and found him a 'very able and reliable pilot'.¹⁰

It took an entire week to process just ten witnesses. By 16 January 1928, 70 witnesses were yet to be heard. It was obvious the Inquest would continue into February.

Courses of the Vessels

The source of much debate, the courses the two vessels were perceived to be on, or took immediately before the collision, were quite literally a matter of point of view.

All manner of scenarios were presented to the court, each differing depending on where the observer stood. It was a complex task for the Coroner to determine what had really transpired.

Captain Clark, aboard S.S. *Burra-Bra*, was following *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe* at a speed of about thirteen-and-a-half knots. He considered the two vessels to be on generally converging courses. When *Tahiti* was approximately its own length behind *Greycliffe*, the ferry altered her course to port, across the liner's bow.

Captain William Silva, Master of *Woollahra*, passed the two vessels on his port side on the return leg of the same route *Greycliffe* was taking to Watsons Bay. He kept an

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

eye on them as he felt that, although they were on parallel courses, they were extremely close to each other. He did not, however, expect an accident to occur.

Woollahra's Deckhand, Edward Weatherburn, on the other hand, considered the vessels were on converging courses, but observed no alteration in course by either.

Erik Dahlen, a passenger aboard *Greycliffe*, seated in her stern, recalled first seeing *Tahiti* shortly after leaving Garden Island. At the time, the liner was approximately 600 feet behind the ferry.

Minutes later he looked up again and was shocked to see *Tahiti* barely 50 feet from where he was sitting, and realised there would be a collision. In retrospect, he recognised a change of course had been effected, but could not say which vessel had done so.

Chief Petty Officer William Bryant of H.M.A.S. *Success* was standing on the wharf at Garden Island awaiting a ferry. He concluded the vessels were on converging courses. However, he said, approximately 750 yards from Garden Island, and about 450 yards ahead of *Tahiti*, *Greycliffe* changed her course to port across *Tahiti's* bow.

Able Seaman John Barry was also on the wharf at Garden Island. His statements supported those of CPO Bryant. He attested to seeing *Greycliffe* change course between one and one-and-a-half points, but placed her only about 100 yards ahead of *Tahiti*.

However, Adrian Galjaard, a navy cook, had a slightly different opinion. Also awaiting a ferry at Garden Island, he considered *Greycliffe* had effected no change as such in her course. Instead, he felt, she was on a course gradually curving to port.

A further point of view was tendered by Ethelbert Elliott, a clerk in the torpedo office on Garden Island. In his opinion, *Greycliffe* was steering for Bradleys Head, but then swung to starboard.

S.S. *Woollahra*, in the centre of the picture, pulling out of Circular Quay. The ferry was on the port side of *Tahiti*, running in the opposite direction on the return leg of *Greycliffe's* route to Watsons Bay, when the collision occurred. It was because of *Woollahra's* presence, Pilot Carson later attested, that he could not manoeuvre *Tahiti* any further to port away from *Greycliffe*; he had to steer a more-or-less parallel course to take the vessel between the two ferries.

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❧ The Coronial Inquest ❧

Pilot Carson offered the final observation on the subject of courses of the two vessels. *Tahiti*, he said, had gained on *Greycliffe* as she pulled away from Garden Island, but the overtaking process diminished after a short time as the ferry picked up speed. Carson explained *Greycliffe* then maintained her position four points off his starboard bow for several minutes, before she suddenly and unexpectedly altered her course a full 20 degrees across his bow.

The Condition of Greycliffe's Steering Gear

According to the Department of Navigation's Shipwright Surveyor, Malcolm Halliday, the last survey conducted on *Greycliffe*, in early June 1927, revealed no reason for concern. Everything was found to be in good condition, including the steering gear, which had been subjected to particular scrutiny, as recent repairs had been undertaken on one of the rudders, which had struck a submerged object.

Halliday explained that the sponsons of Watsons Bay ferries were often damaged through bumping wharves, particularly between Garden Island and Watsons Bay, because of the swell. The effect was especially evident at Nielsen Park Wharf, as it was more exposed than other wharves.

Greycliffe was again in dry dock on 20 September 1927 to replace a rudder blade that had been damaged after striking something underwater.

Captain Barnes was asked whether *he* had encountered problems with *Greycliffe's* steering. He told the Coroner he had indeed; when the ferry was picking up speed, she tended to pull to starboard. However, once under way she had a propensity to pull to port. This gradual curve to port might suggest the ferry had a right-handed propeller, as any right-handed propeller will gradually force a vessel's bow to port.

The View from Greycliffe's Wheelhouse

Shipwright Surveyor Halliday testified further that all steamers were required to have ample vision from the wheelhouse. He explained that, although the Department of Navigation had no power to alter designs, a certificate of seaworthiness would only be granted if it were judged that a vessel could be navigated efficiently by the helmsman.

The base of the rear windows of *Greycliffe's* wheelhouse stood at a height of five feet 10½ inches above the deck, and just two-thirds of an inch above the roof of the upper deck cabin. Although no official data or plans seem to have survived, rough dimensions of the wheelhouse, which were recorded during the Marine Court, would indicate the windows were about eighteen inches high; their width is not documented. However, if one accepts that an average door is approximately three feet wide, and we know from the Marine Court the inside of the wheelhouse was seven feet wide, we might assume the windows were each a little less than two feet wide.

Halliday considered *Greycliffe's* wheelhouse windows offered ample opportunity for a helmsman to see *Tahiti* approaching from behind. His view should have been unobstructed. However, having said that, Halliday added that in all his years of navigation, he had never heard of the necessity to keep a lookout astern; the rule was always to keep a lookout ahead of a vessel.

The court then made comparisons with other ferries on the harbour that had wheelhouses of similar design, such as *Vaocluse*, as it was found there was no exact replica of *Greycliffe* in service.

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Captain William Silva, who was the regular master of *Woollahra*, had also occasionally captained *Greycliffe*. However, his views differed to those of Halliday. Under questioning from Mr. Berne, for the Police and the Coroner, he expressed a necessity to keep a look-out all around the ferry.

Berne: *What is your practice regarding a lookout astern?*

Silva: *I either step outside the wheelhouse or look out of the door.*

Fletcher: *When altering your course what do you do?*

Silva: *I look around to see if there is anything behind me.*

Berne: *When proceeding down the harbour is it your custom to frequently look around?*

Silva: *If I thought there was another steamer behind me I would keep my eye on it.*

Berne: *You consider that a prudent thing to do?*

Silva: *Yes; especially if there is a big steamer about.*¹¹

Not surprisingly, Pilot Carson had a similar opinion. In reply to a question posed by Mr. Manning, he said bluntly,

*If the captain of Greycliffe had been observing me as closely as I was observing him, you would not be standing here getting rich quick, Mr. Manning, and I would not be standing here a ruined man.*¹²

The Inquest Shortened

The inquest had now been running on and off since 9 November 1927. All parties were eager to bring the matter to a close as soon as possible.

On 21 January, Dr. Brissenden, for the Union Steamship Company, suggested the proceedings could be shortened considerably if material and evidence from the Court of Marine Enquiry were not constantly submitted for discussion by counsel.

Fletcher concurred. He announced he would refrain from calling new witnesses and taking any further evidence on the facts of the incident, with the exception of professional opinions. Even with the witnesses which remained, however, he considered it would still take until the end of the following week before all had been heard.

Mr. Manning, for Sydney Ferries, agreed with Dr. Brissenden's suggestion to shorten proceedings and told the Coroner he would co-operate in this regard. Delighted, Fletcher concluded, 'If this spirit continues to prevail I should be able to conclude the inquest next week'.¹³ And this he did.

The Coroner's Findings

On 6 February 1928, Fletcher heard the final statements of evidence. He announced he would declare his findings the following morning, Tuesday, 7 February.

After considering evidence given by many witnesses over the period of some three months, Fletcher, in his official statement, returned a verdict of negligence on the

❧ The Coronial Inquest ❧

part of the navigator of *Tahiti*. However, he also concluded that there was contributory negligence on the part of the officer navigating *Greycliffe*. Nonetheless, he considered neither act constituted criminal negligence.

Fletcher reasoned that although *Tahiti* had generally followed the correct course for outbound seagoing vessels, the navigator [Pilot Carson] had contravened Article 43 of the Sydney Harbour Trust Regulations by exceeding the eight-knot speed limit for that part of the harbour. He also found Carson to have contravened Articles 23 and 24 of the Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea because, as *Tahiti* was effectively an overtaking vessel, Carson had a duty to keep her out of the way of the vessel being overtaken, in this case *Greycliffe*.

The Coroner recognised, however, that Pilot Carson might not have expected *Greycliffe* to change course until some time later. The turn attributed to the ferry occurred before reaching Bradleys Head whereas, under normal circumstances, *Greycliffe* should not have commenced her turn towards Nielsen Park until after passing Bradleys Head.

Therefore, contributory negligence was ascribed to the navigator of *Greycliffe* [Captain Barnes] as, although he was initially proceeding on his usual course, at his usual speed, he effected a turn to port, but did not ascertain it was safe to do so. He therefore broke Article 29 of the Regulations for Prevention of Collisions at Sea which states a navigator 'should keep a proper lookout or take any precaution which may be required by the ordinary practice of seamen or by the special circumstances of the case'.¹⁴

Given the evidence of witnesses and the ferry captain's own statements regarding *Greycliffe's* tendency to pull to port, the Coroner defied the findings of the Court of Marine Enquiry, concluding *Greycliffe* had indeed altered her course to port, by between one and one-and-a-half points.

At that time, *Tahiti* was approximately 300 feet astern of her. From this point in time, he considered *Greycliffe* travelled approximately 680 feet at the rate of nine knots, whilst *Tahiti* travelled about 950 feet at the speed of twelve knots.

Whether Barnes' change of course was made consciously or otherwise, he could not determine. He was unsure if this was caused by slackness in the rudder chains, but suggested should this have indeed been the case, more care should be taken by the relevant authorities to ensure correct and timely maintenance is undertaken. Fletcher observed ruefully;

*To complete the unfortunate set of circumstances which led to the disaster it appears that the Greycliffe altered her course to port at an earlier stage than was usual, whereas if the alteration had been delayed for a further minute or a minute and a half, the Tahiti would probably have come into view on her port side.*¹⁵

Reflecting on the difficulty in extracting the facts from all the statements made during the hearing, Fletcher explained he had based his findings upon

...the evidence of a considerable number of independent witnesses who viewed the progress of the Tahiti and the Greycliffe, and witnessed the collision between them from different angles – also the evidence of the material and available witnesses from the crews and passengers of both vessels – and the expert testimony of gentlemen qualified to express their opinions from the material at their disposal – and bearing in mind that all estimates of distances and directions given in evidence by eyewitnesses are

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*approximate only, and based upon individual impressions, which, under the circumstances, must be expected to vary – and believing that, with very few exceptions, the witnesses gave their evidence honestly and to the best of their ability....*¹⁶

In closing, the Coroner expressed his displeasure with the evidence given by *Tahiti*'s Captain Aldwell. He could not believe the statements he had given in Wellington were made under duress.

Furthermore, he criticised the Union Steamship Company's decision to send *Tahiti* on her journey to Wellington on the evening of the accident, whilst the Police were preoccupied with the recovery of bodies. Without informing them, *Tahiti* departed Sydney, taking with her the only opportunity police had to take statements of evidence from passengers who may have witnessed the course of events.

Fletcher identified 40 victims of the tragedy. With just two exceptions, he found their causes of death to be asphyxia from drowning, or probable drowning. The two remaining victims, Margery Giraud and Mabel Carroll, he considered, died from injuries received.

Analysing the Findings

The most significant of Coroner Fletcher's findings was his rejection of Judge Campbell's conclusions in the Marine Court regarding *Greycliffe*'s roll in the accident. The Coroner felt there was enough evidence to suggest *Greycliffe*'s alleged turn to port, towards *Tahiti*, had indeed taken place. This act, he considered, was a major contributory factor in the accident.

Although *Tahiti*'s suspected excessive speed was not refuted as a fundamental issue—and was very probably strengthened—it was *Greycliffe*'s alteration to port which was considered the initiating action.

However, without the power to issue penalties, the Coroner could do little more than apportion blame. In so far, the findings of the Marine Court of Enquiry stood firm, and a rash of individual claims for compensation followed.

The Union Steamship Company's liner RMS *Tahiti* heading up Sydney Harbour towards the Heads, under the command of a pilot.

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❧ The Bow Theory ❧

A THEORY widely speculated as being a possible cause of the collision was what was coined the 'Bow Theory'. Re-enacted in several experiments and reported in the *Scientific American* magazine at the time, theorists sought to show that two vessels in close proximity, with a flow of water between them, were drawn together, overriding evasive action by either boat, and making a collision unavoidable.

The 'Bow Theory' was introduced in each of the trials by counsel for Sydney Ferries to explain *Greycliffe's* movements prior to and during the accident; it became the basis of their defence. Due to the significance of this issue, and in order to avoid some repetition, the progress of the theory through each trial has been drawn together into this separate chapter.

Called to the defence of Sydney Ferries, British Naval Architect John Thompson explained the theory was based on scientific reckonings, which he supported with evidence from the 1911 collision between RMS *Olympic* and HMS *Hawk*.¹

One of a six-man panel which reviewed evidence in the *Titanic* enquiry in 1912, Thompson boasted some 27 years experience in shipbuilding and marine engineering. To his credentials, he counted memberships of the Institute of Naval Architects, the Institute of Marine Engineering, and the Institute of Mechanical Engineering. He was also Naval Architect Assessor to the Board of Trade and Chief Designer of Merchant Craft for the British Admiralty during World War I.

Thompson concluded that when a large and a small vessel proceed on parallel or slightly converging courses in shallow water, and the larger vessel is overtaking, it produces bow wave repulsion so strong that it can change the course of the smaller vessel across the path of the larger, overriding any evasive action by the smaller vessel.²

Experiments, he said, had proven bow wave resistance was greater in shallow water than in deeper, but the greater the difference in speeds of the two vessels, the smaller was the risk of collision.

However, if the larger vessel were faster, and in particular if she increased speed while passing the smaller vessel in close proximity, the attractive forces were increased to an extent that the smaller would be unavoidably drawn into a collision.³

The results of such experiments showed that under certain circumstances, this interaction was a serious danger to navigation. In such a case, the pressure wave from a larger, over-taking vessel pushes the stern of the smaller craft away, thus bringing that craft's bow in the opposite direction, towards the larger vessel. If a swerve toward a ship were detected, a collision could only be prevented by immediate helm action to control the vessel. Failing this a collision could occur 'within comparatively few seconds'.⁴

The relevance of the theory in the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* case was that *Greycliffe* was seen to have made a distinct change of course to port which brought her across *Tahiti's* path. For Sydney Ferries, it was imperative they prove the change of course was involuntary and a result of *Tahiti's* bow wave which drew the ferry in. Sydney Ferries needed a

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

defence against an accusation of negligence against Captain Barnes, to explain how *Greycliffe* came to be in the position she was.

Failure to convince the court could imply Captain Barnes had taken his vessel somewhere it should not have been. Consequently, the 'Bow Theory' became the crux of Sydney Ferries' defence. This was supported by their claim against the Union Steamship Company that *Tahiti* had exceeded the speed limit, and this became the basis of their attack upon Carson and Aldwell.

First presented during the Court of Marine Enquiry in late 1927, Thompson explained his theory in great detail, supported by diagrams and blueprints, and was subject to harsh questioning and ridicule over a number of days by counsel for both the Union Steamship Company and Pilot Carson. Mr. Evans, counsel for Carson, was particularly critical of the 'complicated' hypothesis.

Thompson: (In reply to a question from Evans) *A floating particle is without inertia.*

Evans: *Will you address me with the crude clarity that Huxley would address a vulgar audience?*

Campbell: *It was a mere figure of speech.*

Evans: *My understanding is so crude, perhaps, that I can understand Huxley and Tindall, but I have not been able to understand this gentleman. (To the witness) In ecclesiastical terms perhaps it was something spiritual? (Laughter)*

Campbell: *Let us be serious...*

Thompson: *I am not used to this form of cross-examination in British Admiralty Courts.*

Evans: (Tongue in cheek) *I know I am a bit rough. (Laughter) But it is necessary in the interests of my client that things should be cleared up.*⁵

It soon became clear counsel for the defence had no counter-evidence whatsoever; their strategy was criticism of the witness, and mockery of the 'Bow Theory'. Counsel for the Union Steamship Company, Dr. Brissenden, also took his turn poking fun at Sydney Ferries' star witness, but it began to turn antagonistic. Brissenden asked Thompson how much time he had spent preparing his evidence for the hearing, to which he replied he had worked on it some eight hours per day since the week after the collision.

Brissenden: *Well that is an example to the colonial... I am surprised you came out to Australia.*

Thompson: *I am surprised that you as an Australian should be surprised at anything.*

Brissenden: *You know we build ships in Australia?*

Thompson: *Yes. And you take a long time to build them.*

Brissenden: *Do you know that it takes from 10 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon to warm up the Tahiti's boilers?*

❧ The Bow Theory ❧

Thompson: *If it takes them all day to warm up the boilers the machinery should be thrown overboard and the engineers with it.*

Brissenden: *I will have the matter attended to directly she returns to Sydney.*

Thompson: (Of the engineers) *They ought to be ashamed of themselves, and are not entitled to be engineers...*

Brissenden *They will all get the sack.* (laughter)⁶

Whilst in conclusion Evans and Brissenden did not fully reject the theory, they felt it bore little relevance to the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* case. Evans added, however, he had found some of Thompson's statements 'pure nonsense'.⁷

Surprisingly, for all the heated discussion and importance of the evidence for Sydney Ferries, Justice James Campbell lent it little weight. In his findings in the Marine Court, he merely stated, 'Whether a bump threw *Greycliffe*'s stern out, or that effect was produced by a bow wave... does not seem important to me to determine or inquire'.⁸

Subsequently called before the Coronial Inquest in late January and early February 1928, Thompson explained further that the first effect of what he called an 'invisible disturbance below the surface of the water'⁹, was upon steering. The result would be to '...change the course of the smaller vessel in towards the larger vessel, and overcome any helm action'.¹⁰

The testimony reverted to bickering again, just as it had in the Court of Marine Enquiry.

Fletcher: *I am afraid you two will be at loggerheads again.*

Evans: *He's attacking us. Do you think we are going to take that sitting down?*

Sheridan: (For the Harbour Trust) *That includes me. I've been attacked outside.*¹¹

However, Coroner Harry Fletcher could also not be convinced that Thompson's bow wave theory influenced the collision. He felt,

*...if the bow wave repulsion created by the Tahiti influenced the movements of the Greycliffe at all, it was not until the stage had been reached when the collision was unavoidable.*¹²

In the Admiralty Court, which commenced hearing the case in April 1928 [see the following chapter], the matter was raised yet again. This time, however, pre-empting the introduction of this evidence a third time, counsel for the Union Steamship Company and Pilot Carson, who had been unprepared for it in the first two trials, sought permission to collect data to defend itself in the civil trial. An application for a commission to obtain evidence in the United Kingdom was granted them and, as a result, the hearing was delayed some eighteen months whilst information was gathered.

When the trial finally got underway, in late 1929, Mr. Manning, KC, counsel for Sydney Ferries, spoke of a 'phenomenon of interaction between vessels', explaining to the court *Tahiti*'s bow wave had a particularly 'important bearing on the last phase of the collision'.¹³ He cited evidence of tank experiments which showed an inward pull at

☛ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ☛

a distance of some 250 feet. The closer the vessels, the more pronounced the swing would be.

However, in summing up his findings in that court, Justice Halse Rogers stated he could not find *Greycliffe's* change in course to have been caused by wave repulsion. He did not believe *Greycliffe* could have been pulled in towards *Tahiti* by her bow wave from a distance of several hundred feet, and found tank experiments did not support the theory.

...no person, let alone any practical seaman, was called who ever experienced any appreciable force emanating from an overtaking vessel and acting ahead of her bow. Their case on interaction is based entirely on the results of experiments carried out in England.

...Even if I were satisfied that it is possible to reproduce in an experimental tank the conditions affecting the vessels immediately prior to collision, I should hesitate to rely on the results obtained unless they were corroborated by the experiences of seamen. As I am not satisfied that those conditions can be reproduced, and as no seaman has been called who has ever experienced any appreciable affect of the forces said to operate ahead of the bow of the overtaking vessel, the plaintiffs have failed to satisfy me that such forces do operate as claimed.

The onus is on the plaintiffs not only of proving that there are forces operating ahead of the bow capable of causing an overtaken vessel to swing in, but also that such forces were capable of causing such a turn as occurred in this case. Neither of these points has been established to my satisfaction.¹⁴

He therefore rejected the 'Bow Theory' completely.

*...I feel bound to reject the theory of interaction as affording an explanation of the initial turning movement of the *Greycliffe*; in other words, I cannot find that the admitted change in course was involuntary.¹⁵*

Analysing the Findings

It is extraordinary that despite the fact the 'Bow Theory' was rejected in the first two courts, counsel for Sydney Ferries introduced it for a third time, in the Admiralty Court. Notwithstanding this, when their defence failed on each occasion, Sydney Ferries had no further argument in their war chest which could feasibly explain why the change in *Greycliffe's* course occurred.

The theory might explain why *Greycliffe* was drawn across *Tahiti's* bow in a perpendicular direction to the latter's course as the two vessels impacted, but it did not convincingly explain why *Greycliffe* changed course to port at an angle of up to 45 degrees on a length of several hundred feet, thus bringing her into a position whereby a collision was both inevitable and unavoidable.

It is this fundamental failure to explain *Greycliffe's* movements which prevented Sydney Ferries from being exonerated in each court, as they had hoped.

☞ The Admiralty Court, 1928-30 ☞

ON 11 April 1928, just two months after the completion of the Coroner's Inquest, Sydney Ferries brought an action against the Union Steamship Company, seeking compensation for the loss of *Greycliffe*. Bolstered by the findings against *Tahiti* in the first two trials, Sydney Ferries felt confident it could successfully secure £30,000 in damages.

Application for a Commission

In immediate response to the claim, the Union Steamship Company submitted an application to Chief Justice Street for a commission to collect evidence from material witnesses abroad. Their request was made in anticipation of the resubmission of evidence which had been used against them in the earlier hearings. The evidence in question regarded British Naval Architect John Thompson's theory of interaction between vessels in close proximity, which was based on lessons learned from shipping accidents and tank experiments carried out in Britain [see previous chapter].

Thompson had claimed it was impossible to re-enact his experiments in Australia, as no tank large enough was available for the purpose. Therefore, afraid they would be unprepared should Sydney Ferries decide to use this evidence against them in the Admiralty Court, the Union Steamship Company sought consent to interview professionals in the United Kingdom. Such experts included a Professor of Naval Architecture at Glasgow University, and a member of the Scientific Department of shipbuilding firm John Brown & Co. Ltd., of Clydebank, Scotland.

As the Union Steamship Company's witnesses were abroad, they were out of the Court's jurisdiction and could, therefore, not be subpoenaed. As a consequence, an application for a commission was necessary.

Not surprisingly, Sydney Ferries fought the request, claiming there were sufficiently qualified experts available in Australia; an excursion to Britain would be unnecessary. Further, they argued, this was only a ploy to indefinitely delay the hearing; such a postponement would not only make it more difficult to gather witnesses, but the longer the adjournment the less accurate their memories would be.

The Judge disagreed with their argument. It had already been established in the earlier courts it was impossible to verify the 'Bow Theory' in Australia. Furthermore, he felt, the defence would be greatly disadvantaged if it were not fully informed about evidence that Sydney Ferries had every intention of presenting during the trial.

He cautioned, however, that Union Steamships' counsel should not simply be seeking

...an opportunity to embark on a fishing excursion to see if it can find any evidence to help it... [It] should not be a mere roving commission to give [them] a chance of finding evidence abroad, and if I thought that that was what was sought for in this case I should have no hesitation in refusing the application.¹

Satisfied of their intentions, he granted the Union Steamship Company their foreign commission, and the Admiralty Court was adjourned.

It was not until a full eighteen months later that evidence, including test results and a film of experiments carried out in Britain, arrived back in Sydney. In September 1929, a date was finally set for the resumption of the Admiralty Court.

Resumption of the Trial

On 22 October 1929, almost two years after the accident occurred, the hearing was reopened. The unenviable task of finally determining legal responsibility for the collision was assigned Justice Percival Halse Rogers, KC.

Educated at Sydney University and Oxford, Halse Rogers had been on the bar eighteen years. A plump man of average height, he was commissioned KC in 1926, and appointed to the Bench of the New South Wales Supreme Court in June 1928.

Once again, the same witnesses and much of the evidence presented at the Court of Marine Enquiry and Coroner's Inquest some two years previously were before the court.

To avoid repetition of previous material, these proceedings have only been summarised in this chapter. Further information can, however, be obtained through the sources named in the appendices.

In his opening statements, Mr. Manning, KC, appearing for Sydney Ferries recalled the circumstances leading up to the accident. He reminded the court,

On the afternoon of November 3, 1927, in broad daylight, the ferry steamer Greycliffe, on her run from Circular Quay to Watson's Bay, was between Garden Island and Nielsen Park when she was run down by Tahiti. In 30 seconds or less she was cut in two and sent to the bottom.²

Manning alleged *Tahiti's* course was too close to that of *Greycliffe* and that *Tahiti* failed to warn *Greycliffe* of her approach while travelling at a speed greater than regulations allowed.

He produced charts marking the relative positions of the two vessels and displaying their converging courses. Continuing, he said,

The overtaking vessel had the onus placed on her to avoid the collision. The Tahiti, on her voyage down the harbour, should have had a clear vision of what was taking place before her. She should have been able to see the course of vessels in front of her, and travelling in the same direction. Legislation provided that a vessel in her position should make way for vessels ahead of her...She held the key to the situation...³

Mr. Brissenden, appearing on behalf of *Tahiti*, countered that as soon as *Greycliffe* began to alter course, *Tahiti* sounded two blasts of her horn, stopped her engines, and then ordered full reverse. *Greycliffe*, however, continued her course to port, neglected to sound her horn, and failed to keep a proper lookout.

Greycliffe's Master Barnes was called to the stand that first day. He recollected the events leading up to the tragedy. Less than a minute before the collision, he told the court, he felt *Greycliffe* alter course approximately one quarter point to port. He attributed this to the 'fall' of the rudder, which, he said, was a normal occurrence as the rudder was only semi-balanced due to slackness in the chains. He straightened his course, and then moments later heard two blasts of a ship's horn. Until that moment, he was unaware of *Tahiti's* presence. However, by then it was too late.

❧ The Admiralty Court ❧

Automatically porting his helm, Barnes had barely turned the wheel two spokes when the ferry was struck. There had not even been enough time for *Greycliffe* to react.

Greycliffe's fireman, Alfred Dean, also appeared that day, and displayed how the accident occurred using models. The story had been told before and it was doubtful anything new would come to light.

The following day, *Greycliffe*'s Deckhand, Frederick Jones, and Engineer, Jack Barrett, were called to the stand. They recalled the events as they remembered them, but there was nothing new to hear.

Others before the court during the ensuing days were Petty Officer Arthur Cornford, a passenger on *Greycliffe*; Roger Blunt, a passenger on *Tahiti*; Police Sergeant James Hynde of the Garden Island Dockyard Police; Charles Comber, a Signalman from Garden Island; Joseph Kirkham, Chief Yeoman of Signals at Garden Island; Petty Officer Walter Halliwell of H.M.A.S. *Success*, and Adrian Galjaard, a Navy cook. All recounted what they had experienced on the day of the accident and gave evidence regarding the speeds and courses of the two vessels.

Many other witnesses were also called, but their accounts, too, were little more than a repetition of what had been said in the previous two courts of enquiry.

The Judge's Findings

The fact that no new evidence had been presented made it all the more surprising that when Justice Rogers handed down his judgement on 20 November 1929, his conclusions were much more detailed and clearly defined than those of the earlier courts. He made twelve significant findings:

1. *Tahiti* travelled between Garden Island and the site of the collision at a speed far greater than was allowed by Harbour Trust regulations
2. *Tahiti* was aware of *Greycliffe*'s presence off her forward starboard bow
3. *Tahiti* made two slight alterations to port; the first to keep *Greycliffe* at a safe angle and the second in reaction to the latter's proximity
4. The general courses of both vessels were converging
5. *Tahiti* gave no warning to *Greycliffe* of her proximity
6. *Tahiti*'s change of course took her closer to Bradleys Head than was allowed by sailing regulations
7. If *Greycliffe* had maintained her course, a collision would have been avoided
8. *Greycliffe* changed course by approximately 45 degrees without any warning
9. *Greycliffe* altered course without the Master checking to see if his action would cause his course to cross that of another vessel
10. From the moment *Greycliffe* altered course until immediately before the collision, the Master continued on his course without any observation as to the proximity of any other vessel
11. The danger began from the moment *Greycliffe* altered her course. The Pilot aboard *Tahiti*, however, did not immediately realise the implication. Had he done so, they could have still been enough time to take evasive action and possibly avoid a collision. By the time the Pilot recognised the danger, however, it was too late to avoid a collision through evasive action. Even if the Master of *Greycliffe* had turned to starboard immediately after he heard the two blasts of *Tahiti*'s horn, it is unlikely his action would have been effective.

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

The Pilot failed to act as promptly as he should have. Even had he done so, it is questionable whether the collision would have been avoided; when he failed to, a collision was inevitable

12. According to the law, the Pilot was in charge of *Tahiti* at all relevant times. The Pilot was a State Official and the owners of *Tahiti* had no choice as to which Pilot would be assigned to them.⁴

In summing up, he said of Carson

...the pilot of the Tahiti saw that he was overtaking the Greycliffe, and he must have known that he was going at a speed prohibited by the regulations... But having the Greycliffe ahead of him on the starboard and the Woollahra approaching on his port side he thought it safe to maintain or rather increase his speed, provided he brought his course on to what he took to be a course parallel to that of the Greycliffe... He must have known or should have known there was a danger if the Greycliffe did not maintain her course, but he acted on the assumption that she would not change her course without warning or without looking.⁵

Of Barnes, he stated,

The master of the Greycliffe had a clear course ahead of him to Shark Island or Nielsen Park. There was no necessity for him to change his course till he was abreast of Bradley's Head... He acted on the assumption that no vessel was in immediate proximity astern and without looking and without warning he altered his course very rapidly; in fact, made a change of course much greater than was necessary to take him to his destination, and greater than the overtaking vessel could reasonably expect. By so doing he turned a potential danger created by the Tahiti into actual danger, and the collision resulted.⁶

Justice Rogers could not comprehend why *Greycliffe* had made such a change of course, as it took the ferry off its usual course to Nielsen Park.

He found both parties were negligent—*Tahiti* for her speed and failure to warn *Greycliffe* of her approach, and *Greycliffe* for her unexpected turn without observation or forewarning.

Tahiti's Master Aldwell, was also berated. Justice Rogers found he 'should have warned the pilot of the danger arising from excessive speed and lack of warning to *Greycliffe* of *Tahiti's* presence'. Though not held accountable for the accident, Justice Rogers felt Aldwell was 'equally able to form a judgement', but instead allowed Pilot Carson to 'take his own course without question and without warning...'⁷

In conclusion, however, based on his finding that the danger began when *Greycliffe* turned, and that the collision would not have occurred had *Greycliffe* maintained her course, Captain Barnes was found to be guilty of greater negligence than Pilot Carson.

However, as *Tahiti* was found to have been guilty of contributory negligence, blame could not be levelled at one party only. Halse Rogers therefore decided to apportion three-fifths of the culpability to Captain Barnes and two-fifths to Captain Carson.

This outcome meant Sydney Ferries was awarded only 40 percent of the £30,000 damages it originally sought from the Union Steamship Company.

❧ The Admiralty Court ❧

This did not imply the Union Steamship Company could claim the remaining 60 percent; they had suffered no physical damages and were therefore in no position to demand Sydney Ferries' failed three-fifths.

However, counsel for the Union Steamship Company were not finished with the case yet. They formally requested that Sydney Ferries be found accountable for the costs of the entire process, since they had failed to prove their case of wave interaction.

Apportioning Costs

Their claim was heard before Justice Halse Rogers approximately six weeks after the completion of the Admiralty Court. On 19 March 1930, after a short hearing, Halse Rogers rejected their petition. He found Sydney Ferries had already been penalised sufficiently for their failure to prove their case by being required to bear their own costs. The 'Bow Theory' was only one part of the suit, and did not constitute the entire legal action. Sydney Ferries introduced the theory as vital to their case, and that they had not successfully proved it was no reason for them to incur a double penalty.

Sydney Ferries was ordered to pay their own costs, and was granted only two-fifths of their original claim. This, he felt, was penalty enough; they should not be forced to bear the additional costs of the Union Steamship Company as well.

The Appeal

Not surprisingly, neither party was satisfied with the outcome of the trial and award of damages. Both were disappointed and planned to appeal.

Sydney Ferries lodged notice of an appeal before the Full Court on 19 March 1930, in advance of the Union Steamship Company. In this case, the Union Steamship Company deemed it unnecessary to lodge their own notice of appeal, considering one Court of Appeal would serve both causes.

The seemingly endless trials of the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* case were by now angering some members of the community. Litigation had commenced in November 1927 and now, three years later, it was still not over. One frustrated reader wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, complaining,

Cannot something be done to simplify and clarify our law procedure? ...The Tahiti-Greycliff [sic] collision case has, one gathers, cost to date £25,000, and to neither vessel has blame been allocated. Meantime innocent sufferers are in want. Less than the costs incurred to date would probably have satisfied all claimants.⁸

In fact, it was to be yet another year, and therefore a full four years, before litigation finally drew to a close.

Details of the appeal are extremely scant. Nothing appears to have been written about it in the Sydney newspapers between April 1930 and October 1931, when a final statement was published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* confirming the outcome.

A brief announcement in the Full Court yesterday morning marked the closing of the last litigation that flowed from the tragic collision between the liner Tahiti and the ferry steamer Greycliffe in Sydney Harbour on November 3, 1927.⁹

The appeal was heard before Justice Harvey who also found both parties guilty of contributory negligence. He upheld Halse Rogers' earlier finding that, despite *Tahiti's*

negligence, a collision would not have occurred had *Greycliffe* maintained her course. *Greycliffe's* navigator was therefore found to be culpable by a greater proportion than *Tahiti's*, but the final apportionment of blame was amended by Harvey to reflect two-thirds against *Greycliffe* and one third against *Tahiti*.

This finding is particularly significant in that, more than just confirming Halse Rogers' original finding of greater culpability against *Greycliffe*, Harvey in effect strengthened the case against *Greycliffe* by allocating a larger portion of blame in the appeal than was done in the original Admiralty judgement [66% vs. 33% in the appeal as opposed to the Admiralty finding of 60% vs. 40%].

However, this was still not quite the final word. Counsel for the Union Steamship Company, Mr Evans, formally requested the findings be struck out.

Harvey: *Does that finally dispose of the matter?*

Mr Manning: (Counsel for Sydney Ferries) *Yes, your Honor.*¹⁰

Thus four years of litigation finally drew to a close, and the appeal was struck from the record.

Analysing the Findings

Justice Halse Rogers went into more detail in his findings of the case than any other judge before or since. He went to great pains to weigh the evidence and arguments of each counsel before making his conclusions. Where counsel quoted previous cases, Halse Rogers went away and studied them, and was later able to confidently argue why each of these bore any or no relevance to the case whatsoever. There were even times when opposing counsel used the same case in point, but drew differing conclusions and used them for completely different reasons.

Halse Rogers' detailed conclusions have been well-documented in *The State Reports* of 1928 and in particular 1930, of which copies are held at the N.S.W. State Reference Library in Sydney. The Justice explains the process he used to reach his findings, and has clearly studied the 'what ifs' and 'maybes'. The result, summed up in his twelve points [above], are clear, concise explanations of his findings on each of the components of the accident, which lay the blame squarely at the feet of both parties.

However, he did not apportion equal blame. He effectively rejected Justice Campbell's findings in the Marine Court, when he stated a turn to port was indeed effected by *Greycliffe*, which took her across *Tahiti's* bow. Moreover, he stated *Tahiti* did nothing which might cause *Greycliffe* to make its turn, explaining that, had *Greycliffe* not altered course, a collision would never have occurred, despite *Tahiti's* excessive speed.

Indeed, it was not *Tahiti's* speed which concerned Halse Rogers so much, but rather the fact that once the vessel was in *Greycliffe's* proximity, the ferry was not warned of the fact. Instead, Carson and Aldwell simply assumed Barnes knew they were there. In fact, Halse Rogers went one step further, saying that had the accident occurred in the same way, but for the fact *Tahiti* had warned *Greycliffe* of her presence, he would have found 100% against *Greycliffe*, even if *Tahiti* was exceeding the speed limit.

❧ The Admiralty Court ❧

In some respect, this negates the claim that speed was a cause of the accident, which was so widely discussed at the time, and is generally assumed to be the cause in today's accounts. This does not annul the fact *Tahiti* was exceeding the speed limit, but it certainly sheds a different light on this fact as far as its relevance to the case is concerned.

What is even more significant, however, is the finding of the Court of Appeal. Although it was struck out, not only was the case against *Greycliffe*, as presented in the Admiralty Court, upheld, but the final apportionment of liability fell even more heavily against *Greycliffe* than had originally been ruled. This obviously directly implies the perceived culpability of *Tahiti* also fell by several percentage points.

It was, therefore, accepted as an indisputable fact that the turn by *Greycliffe*, which had been rejected by Justice Campbell in his Court of Marine Enquiry, had indeed taken place, and that this action was the major initiator of the tragedy.

Bradleys Head, with her prominent landmark, the mast of HMAS *Sydney* (I). In court, *Greycliffe* was accused of turning to port earlier than was usual for her normal route to Nielsen Park, and before she had even rounded Bradleys Head.

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☞ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ☞

A plaque to the memory of *Greycliffe*'s victims, which stands at the entrance to St. Peter's Church, Old South Head Road, Watsons Bay. It was unveiled by the Right Reverend Bishop D'Arcy Irvine on 11 May 1929. "Erected to the Memory of Those who Lost their Lives in the *Greycliffe* Disaster, Sydney Harbour, 3rd Nov. 1927". It can still be seen today.

© Steve Brew

Nielsen Park, *Greycliffe*'s immediate destination before the collision, and home to so many of the victims of the tragedy.

© City of Sydney Archives

❧ Conclusion ❧

A COURT of Marine Enquiry, a Coronal Inquest, an Admiralty Court and an Appeal have all failed to quash rumour, doubt and controversy over the circumstances surrounding Port Jackson's worst maritime accident. As accounts of the tragedy still vary a great deal, it has been my aim in this book to conclusively set the record straight, and to bring to light information which has previously not been published on the subject. In this chapter, I draw together the significant events, address specific aspects of the story which have caused so much debate and disagreement, and illustrate my conclusions on the causes and effects of the tragedy.

The Victims of the Tragedy

The number of victims varies today depending on which account one reads. However, based on the Coroner's findings in 1928, a total of 40 people were identified as having lost their lives, and it is this figure which I accept as the true number of deaths. Interestingly, even the newspapers of 1927 lost count. Just a day after the accident, for example, one newspaper reported there were already 48 fatalities. Three weeks later, another placed the final death toll at 37. It should be noted, however, these reports were printed before the Coroner's findings were made public.

Since then, some writers have placed the toll as low as 34 and as high as 45. Today we have the convenience of hindsight and the ability to concurrently review the evidence and findings of all four courts. It is, therefore, surprising that present-day accounts vary so much.

All those reported missing were located—even one who was not aboard the ferry—but there was still apparently some doubt as to whether all of the accident's victims had been recovered. Having said that, I have found no reference to further bodies being retrieved from the harbour; as far as I can discern, the final number of lives lost was indeed 40. Biographical material on each of these can be found in Appendix I.

The victims of the accident ranged widely in age; some were retired, some at the peak of their careers, others in the prime of their youth. The communities of Vacluse and Watsons Bay were devastated, whilst towns further afield also grieved. Lives and perceptions changed forever and the effect on individuals, families and their communities as a whole should not be underestimated. Many a family lost their breadwinner and were forced to cope with newfound financial difficulties.

Families mourned their losses and suffered them in ensuing years. Though the physical wounds of the injured healed with time, survivors carried emotional scars and relived the nightmare of fighting for the surface as the ferry sank. In some cases, the emotional strain also cost jobs.

In 1927, the 'Greycliffe Disaster Relief Fund' was set up to help them. By the time it was wound up in March 1931, £6281 had been raised through donations, complemented by an additional £536 earned in interest. Thirty-three people received amounts of between £3 and £110 each to buy clothing or cover funeral costs, whilst a further ten widows received assistance ranging from £275 and £878 according to their circumstances and dependants.¹

Ferry Passengers to Watsons Bay

Although there is proof of the number of *Greycliffe's* victims, I have been unable to locate any documentation verifying the actual number of passengers on the ferry at the time of the accident.

Today, there are only estimates to rely on. During the Court of Marine Enquiry, for example, William Barnes reckoned there were 150 people aboard. Other calculations put the figure at closer to 130. Using evidence from newspaper reports and the enquiries, however, I can only account for 102 people, including the four crew. I am not implying there were only this many people aboard, but I cannot find evidence of more.

Having lost faith in the ferry service at a time when ferry travel was nearing its peak in Sydney², few people in the Vaucluse area would travel by ferry after the accident. Instead, they opted to climb the hill to Old South Head Road and take the tram.

After the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened in 1932, and the number of automobile owners increased, the numbers of ferry passengers dwindled to such an extent that the Watsons Bay and Taronga Park ferry services were amalgamated³. Even before the Bridge's opening, the Watsons Bay service lost £6235 in 1931 and a further £6340 in the first seven months of 1932.⁴

A meeting was held in Parsley Bay in September 1932, chaired by Vaucluse Mayor, Alderman A. Charles Samuel, at which a group of concerned residents vowed to 'use every effort at its disposal to secure a continuance' of the ferry service.⁵ However, their efforts were in vain. Within months, lack of patronage compelled Sydney Ferries to make the unpopular decision to discontinue the service to Nielsen Park, Parsley Bay Wharf (at the northern-most end of Fitzwilliam Road), Central Wharf (off The Crescent) and Watsons Bay. A limited service continued to Nielsen Park for picnickers on Sundays and public holidays, but otherwise, from that time on, weekday ferry commuters were obliged to use the tram or a newly introduced omnibus service.

After 50 years on the timetable, the final ferry departed Watsons Bay for Circular Quay at 7.25 p.m. on 31 July 1933. There was neither ceremony, nor crowds to farewell her. The only signal was the mournful wail of Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook's* siren, which was sounded as she pulled away from the pier.⁶

The limited Nielsen Park ferry service continued for several years before it, too, was finally withdrawn. The wharf itself, however, was not dismantled until the early 1970s. Whilst minimal services to Watsons Bay resumed in 1987, those to Nielsen Park, Central Wharf and Parsley Bay have not to this day.

Memories and Relics

Besides several archived documents, a handful of photographs, and a short silent film clip held by *ScreenSound Australia*, relics of the tragedy are few.

Greycliffe's engines were salvaged from the harbour bed and sold to the Tirau Dairy Factory in New Zealand. They were acquired by the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) at Auckland in 1964, and are still there on display today.

❧ Conclusion ❧

Greycliffe's engine was salvaged from Sydney Harbour and sold to the Tirau Dairy Factory in New Zealand, where they were used for many years. They were acquired by the Museum of Transport and Technology in Auckland in 1964, where they are still on display today.

© MOTAT

Greycliffe House, in Nielsen Park, Vacluse, which gave its name to Greycliffe Avenue, and quite possibly the ferry, was the Lady Eveline Hospital for Babies in 1927.

© Steve Brew

❧ Conclusion ❧

The rest of the vessel, however, was broken up and discarded. Over a two-week period in April 1928, Harbour Trust divers used explosives to destroy the ferry's remains, her funnel being one of the first things to be demolished.

One newspaper report at the time indicated an effort would be made to salvage her propellers, but it is unknown whether this actually occurred, nor whether any other portions of the vessel have survived.

At least one passenger's gold watch and her engagement ring are still buried somewhere in the mud and silt off Whiting Beach. It is probable there are also remains of many other personal items somewhere down there, but it is extremely unlikely they will ever see daylight again.

One legacy of the tragedy at Sydney Boys' High School, however, was that for many decades no student was allowed to play sport until he passed a swimming test.

In all, nine bravery awards were presented by the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society for rescues made by individuals during the accident. These included two Silver Medals, three Bronze Medals and four Certificates of Merit. In 1928 and 1929 awards were made to four of *Greycliffe's* passengers, one of *Greycliffe's* crew, one of *Tahiti's* crew, one of *Woollahra's* passengers, and two Police Officers. In September 1928, Police Sergeant William Shakespeare, who had recently died, was also commended posthumously for his role in rescuing *Greycliffe's* passengers.

In memory of the accident's victims, the 'Greycliffe Memorial Gates' to St. Peter's Church in Watsons Bay were unveiled by the Right Reverend Bishop D'Arcy Irvine on 11 May 1929. The original gates, made of timber, no longer exist, but plaques to their memory can still be seen today on either side of the entrance.

Three streets and at least one house in Sydney are named 'Greycliffe'. Contrary to popular belief, none of these were named for the ferry or the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* tragedy.

Greycliffe Avenue and Greycliffe House in Vacluse were named well before 1927. Greycliffe House, situated in Nielsen Park, was built in 1852 for John Reeve, the son-in-law of William Charles Wentworth. By 1927, it had become the 'Lady Edeline Hospital for Babies', and is today an administrative office of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Bordering the northern side of Nielsen Park, Greycliffe Avenue was previously called Bottle and Glass Road. In 1922, some five years before the 1927 collision, its name was changed to the current Greycliffe Avenue, after Greycliffe House. Although the origin of the ferry's name is unclear, it is most probable her name derived from Greycliffe House as well.

Greycliffe Street in Queenscliff, on Sydney's northern beaches, also existed well before 1927. In 1914, one section of the street was known as Maher Street, whilst the other part was called Queenscliff(e) Road. It is not clear when or why the street's name changed, but it is believed it may have been a combination of 'Greyfells Estate', which appeared on subdivision maps there as early as 1910, and Queenscliff(e) [the 'e' at the end of the word being interchangeable at the time], the result being Greycliffe Street.

Lastly, Greycliffe Avenue in Pennant Hills was named for a large cottage, called 'Greycliffe', which stood on the site prior to the land's subdivision in 1922. The cottage and surrounding area belonged to one Robert Fisher whom, one publication purports, was the owner of the ferry *Greycliffe*. In fact, this is not correct. *Greycliffe* was constructed by shipbuilder David Drake expressly for the Watsons Bay and South

Shore Steam Ferry Company, which later became a part of Sydney Ferries Ltd.; she remained in their possession from construction to destruction.

Digressing slightly, another street of note is Horler Avenue in Vacluse. This short road linking Parsley Road to Parsley Bay Reserve, was named after Edmund Horler, the Vacluse Town Clerk in the 1920s. Horler, whose son Ken was a *Greycliffe* survivor, was treasurer and co-founder of the '*Greycliffe* Disaster Relief Fund'.

Litigation

Individual claims for compensation began in early 1928. The first of these appears to have been Ada Lee-Brown, who sued for £5,000 damages, shortly after the findings of the Marine Court were made public. This fact was reported in the newspapers at the time, probably because she was the first person to do so, but also due to the size of the claim; in 1928, few people earned £10 per week.

Little about individual cases was discussed in the newspapers thereafter, except in February 1931, when the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported Sydney Ferries had already settled several suits and were in the process of settling others. Another seven cases were yet to be heard.

In actual fact, between 1928 and 1931, at least eighty individual actions were brought against both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries. A number of people sued both companies simultaneously. Whilst the largest proportion was levelled at the Union Steamship Company, some 40 percent of claims were made against Sydney Ferries. Claims averaged around £2,500 each, but in reality, ranged between £75 and £20,000.

Whilst some cases were discontinued, most of those who were awarded damages found their final payout just a fraction of their original claim, perhaps five percent. In pound value, the largest grant was £2,750, to a mother with two small children, but even this was less than fourteen percent of what was originally demanded. Conversely, the largest award percentage-wise was just over 30 percent of the original claim.

The size of awards appears to have depended to a great extent on the number and age of dependants surviving a victim. Adult dependants received nothing, whereas minors were awarded amounts which were to be kept in trust funds until reaching the age of 21. The interest earned on such accounts was, until that time, to be paid to the surviving parent for education and maintenance of the minor child or children.

However, litigation was confined not just to families of the victims; survivors also sued for damages resulting from injuries, medical and nursing costs, and the loss or destruction of personal belongings. Many of these suits were also discontinued, but it would appear that, where damages were awarded, they seldom amounted to any more than £50.

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact total of all the awards, the figure is estimated to have been in the vicinity of £20,000. The actual cost of the trials to the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries, though, does not appear to have been documented. However, if we accept the figure given by a gentleman who wrote a letter to the Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* in late 1930 [that the costs until then had come to around £25,000], we might assume the final bill for the entire case may have totalled approximately £50,000. I might add that the lawyers which represented each party still exist, but their *Tahiti-Greycliffe* files have long since been destroyed, so

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this point of reference unfortunately appears to be gone forever. Further information on individual claims for damages can be found in Appendix X.

The Court Cases

There were three main cases: The Court of Marine Enquiry, the Coronial Inquest and the civil case: the Admiralty Court. The latter was followed by an appeal, which is seldom mentioned.

Many of the accounts that appear today simplify the outcomes of the three trials, leading us to believe their judgements were straightforward and clear-cut, each basically disagreeing with the other. The simple answer, summed up in so many compositions in just one or two paragraphs, is that the Court of Marine Enquiry found *Tahiti* to blame; the Coronial Inquest found both vessels negligent, whilst the Admiralty Court found *Greycliffe* more at fault than *Tahiti*. However, as I have illustrated in the preceding chapters, the findings of the three courts of enquiry were much more complicated.

To this day, despite their findings, or perhaps because they differed in some respect, there is no singularly accepted and undisputed cause of the tragedy. Many writers have drawn inaccurate conclusions, or left their accounts incomplete. For example, it would appear no commercial publication has ever mentioned the fact there was an appeal to the Admiralty Court. This is unfortunate as it is extremely significant. Not only did it uphold the Admiralty Court's original findings, but it placed blame against *Greycliffe* by a greater margin than originally apportioned.

Whilst some writers have simply confused the findings of the different courts, others have regrettably applied an overactive imagination in reporting the 'truth'. Is it any wonder it is all so confusing? In this book, I have sought to separate the hearings and clarify the different findings, and thus provide a clear point of reference for those who come after me.

Between 1927 and 1931, each court presented its own version of the course of events to the best of its ability. Many of the scenarios presented by legal counsel are possible; many are quite feasible. But what *really* happened? It is indeed not an easy matter to determine. Some facts are certainly clear, but many facets of the accident remain unexplained, such as why *Greycliffe* altered course across *Tahiti*'s bow at all. In the initial court case, the suggestion that such a drastic change of course took place was found so preposterous that it was believed it never occurred. However, each of the ensuing courts accepted *Greycliffe*'s deviation from course as fact. But was it a voluntary act or not?

Today, we have the luxury of computer technology, black boxes, and similar modern tools that may give us all the evidence we need to determine the facts. For example, Sydney's harbour departure regulations today stipulate an outbound vessel is required to advise Harbour Control upon clearing Fort Denison, Bradleys Head and other points within the harbour. Had this been the case in 1927, we may well have had the opportunity to pinpoint *Tahiti*'s, and perhaps *Greycliffe*'s, speed with some accuracy. In the courtroom in 1927, however, matters were decided on the basis of circumstantial evidence, one man's word against another's, and the opinions of eyewitnesses who often confused what they saw.

The Pilot, the Captains and Negligence

Although a case of criminal negligence was never found against any individual, nor any form of penalty imposed, the reputations of the two men who triggered the tragic chain of events were destroyed forever. Thomas Carson, who was known before the accident as 'one of the most careful and accurate pilots'⁷ on Sydney Harbour, had his Pilot's License suspended and was sent to Newcastle to work for the Navigation Department there for a number of months. Although little is known about what became of William Barnes, he attested in the Admiralty Court in 1929 that since the accident he had been relegated to shore duties, such as wharf inspection.

Carson, however, was vilified by the media from day one. Stern-faced pictures of Carson and Aldwell—though none of Barnes—appeared in the newspaper the day after the accident, that is, in the first edition to carry the story. The same picture of Carson reappeared in the paper a few days later. Unfair bias was therefore levelled upon him even before the trials began—the media was in possession of no proof but their own opinions. Despite never having been found solely responsible for the tragedy, even in today's accounts, the Pilot appears to have always been singled out as the 'bad guy'; one account even uses the word 'villain'!

In the Court of Marine Enquiry, Mr Evans, who represented Carson in all of the trials, addressed this, emphasising that the case had been prejudiced against his client from the outset. 'I find it difficult to discredit this propaganda', he said; my client 'has been grossly defamed...'⁸

This was certainly not helped by the fact he and his family resided in Watsons Bay, right in the very heart of the mourning, suffering and anger. Owing to that fact, his family also suffered in its own way in the wake of the tragedy. Evans alluded to this when he said, 'Fate has dealt my client a very cruel blow... The notoriety attaching to him and his family is a curiously cruel one'.⁹ They became *persona non grata* in many parts of the community and his younger two sons were forced from the school they were attending.

William Barnes, on the other hand, remained more hidden from public view. His picture never appeared in the newspapers like those of Carson and Aldwell, and, as he lived many miles from Vacluse, he was able to avoid a lot of bad publicity and public humiliation. Even now, it has not been an easy task to trace the man. Little is documented about him and I have been unable to establish what became of him; he appears to have faded into obscurity.

Despite this, stories have circulated that Barnes was reading the newspaper at time of the accident and not paying attention to his course. Other rumours suggest he had the wheel tied in place with rope, or was not even in the wheelhouse as the ferry gradually drifted off course to port. Absurd as these anecdotes may seem, the fact that he admitted he was unaware of *Tahiti's* presence until he heard her horn blasts might lend weight to such theories. Moreover, there are suggestions that the unions did their utmost to protect their man. However, without corroboration—which will probably never be possible—none of these theories can be accepted as a factual account of what 'really' happened aboard *Greycliffe*.

Although *Tahiti's* true speed was never firmly established, there is little doubt the vessel was exceeding the speed limit for that part of the harbour immediately prior to the accident. This much was accepted as fact by all of the courts. Ironically, however, speed limits within the harbour have since been increased. Today, the limit for

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outbound commercial vessels between the Harbour Bridge and a line drawn between Bradleys Head and Shark Point is ten knots; thereafter it increases to twelve. It is interesting to theorise that today, perhaps, Carson would not have been found guilty on this count at all, and that Barnes would have been found 100 percent culpable instead.

It should also be noted that as much as Carson would have been protecting his own self in the trial, Captain Aldwell had more reason to deny excessive speed than simply to protect his colleague Carson. That they colluded to conceal the true speed is too easy a conclusion to draw. The fact is, had Aldwell admitted the vessel had indeed exceeded the speed limit, he would have immediately incriminated himself for neglecting to warn the Pilot he was so doing. The Navigation Act of 1912 clearly stipulates that an officer is guilty of misconduct if found accountable for careless navigation and, without reasonable cause, failure of duty. Aldwell's motivation was, apparently, simply to save his own career.

The Cause of the Tragedy

The speed of the vessel was, however serious, only a contributory factor in the collision; it did not actually cause *Greycliffe* to cross *Tahiti's* bow. *Greycliffe* was off course, and *this* is the crux of the case.

I interviewed survivor Ken Horler during my research for this book. He attested to the fact that as a 14-year-old lad, sitting in *Greycliffe's* stern with his school mates, he personally witnessed the lead-up to the collision. Surprised he was never called to testify, even he maintains—to this day—that the ferry was way off its usual course to Nielsen Park.

The 'Bow Theory', which was introduced as evidence by Sydney Ferries in order to explain why *Greycliffe* had changed course, was rejected in the first two court cases. Therefore, one must ask, why did Sydney Ferries then introduce it as a defence for a third time, in the Admiralty Court? Frankly, they had little choice. Had they not put forward a theory of involuntary movement, they would have had to have admitted the variation from course was done knowingly or intentionally. This would have amounted to self-incrimination by Barnes and would most probably have quickly led to the blame being placed squarely upon him: a clear case of negligence.

Strangely, however, in his findings at the completion of the Court of Marine Enquiry, Judge Campbell concluded there was no logical reason for a change of course, and therefore refused to accept it had occurred at all! This is an exceptionally unusual conclusion to come to. Several witnesses, including a retired Police Detective, naval personnel and the masters of several vessels, all attested to the fact a change in course was indeed made by *Greycliffe*. Moreover, when Carson claimed the path he suggested *Greycliffe* took was a long way off course, Campbell retorted, 'The action taken by the *Greycliffe* was incomprehensible. She had no right to be on that course at all'.¹⁰ Why, then, was there later such an obvious turnaround in his perception of events? His about-face is all the more peculiar when one considers it clearly contradicts the findings of the ensuing two cases—and the appeal—where it was accepted as fact that *Greycliffe* deviated from her usual course.

More significantly, why would Sydney Ferries introduce the 'Bow Theory' as evidence to explain why a turn took place at all, if no turn was made?! Obversely, if it was merely that the courses were converging, why introduce the 'Bow Theory' in the

first place? Why not simply rely on that fact alone to explain why *Greycliffe* was, or came to be, in such close proximity to *Tahiti*'s bow? Campbell's refusal to accept there was a change in course is questionable to say the least.

Notwithstanding this, an independent source labels Judge Campbell as 'a poor lawyer'¹¹ whose appointment to the Supreme Court was criticised because of his age. If nothing else, he certainly proved himself to be a dishonest man. Upon reaching the mandatory retirement age for judges of 70 years, he refused to step down. He lied about his true age and declared he was actually two years younger. It was not until a birth certificate was obtained from Scotland that the embarrassed Judge was forced from office less than one-and-a-half years after handing down his findings in the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* case.¹²

The result of this fiasco was that, in 1929, State Parliament had to validate his findings through legislation, lest the judgements he made after his seventieth birthday be rendered null and void. It is ironic, and indeed hard to believe, that despite this, whilst Royal Commissioner for an inquiry in Queensland a short while later, he found one party 'guilty of fraud and dishonesty'¹³. Campbell thus lost his credibility; his actions place a large question-mark over both his integrity and his judgement.

Based on all of these factors, it is extremely difficult to accept his ignorance of two pieces of unambiguous evidence showing that (a) *Greycliffe*'s steering gear malfunctioned only minutes before the collision, and (b) the vessel clearly altered course to port, placing her moments later across *Tahiti*'s bow. The testimony presented over the course of three separate trials and an appeal plainly demonstrates *Greycliffe*'s turn was the instigating factor of the tragedy.

Having said that, however, whether Barnes was aware of his deviation from course, can today neither be proved nor disproved. If the turn was made consciously, whether *Tahiti* warned *Greycliffe* that she was in the vicinity or not, does not discharge the ferry master from his responsibility of looking to see it was safe to do so. Thus, if the turn to port was indeed actioned intentionally, it must be presumed he did not look.

However, weighing the opposite scenario, that the turn was involuntary — and remembering that Captain Barnes, himself, stated he was unaware of a deviation from course — he can still not be exonerated. To his defence, he claimed that not only had the ferry's steering gear malfunctioned moments before the accident, but also made mention of the vessel's propensity to pull to port when underway. Thus, if the course was indeed affected by either of these two steering failures, the question must be posed, why did he not notice and take corrective action? Even more sinister, if he was not aware of the deviation, then why not: where was he and what was he doing?

Tahiti's speed may have reduced the amount of time she may have otherwise had for taking evasive action, but the turn was clearly something both Carson and Aldwell never expected to occur. It took place before the ferry reached abeam of Bradleys Head, and therefore well before her regular turn to port, which would have been actioned to take her north-east to Nielsen Park. Although a propensity to pull to port may explain a gradual curve towards *Tahiti*, it does not sufficiently explain the distinct turn to port, which several witnesses claimed they had seen, nor the angle of impact of between 65 and 90 degrees that two independent professional witnesses considered had occurred. These two latter gentlemen, a naval architect and a marine surveyor, both had the opportunity to examine *Greycliffe*'s hull at length after the accident.

❧ Conclusion ❧

Although their estimates differ somewhat (65-70 degrees vs. 80-90 degrees), they both indicate an angle much greater than a gradual pull to port could explain in such a short time. Thus, except for a possible failure in the steering gear, there unfortunately remains today no feasible reason why *Greycliffe* turned when she did.

Had Justice Campbell arrived at a verdict of negligence—even of contributory negligence—on *Greycliffe's* behalf in his Marine Court in 1928 there would not be the confusion apparent in today's accounts of the tragedy. These facts, and in particular Campbell's obvious ignorance of solid evidence, should be sufficiently compelling for historians and authors to reassess their conclusions.

Although the significance and adequacy of *Tahiti's* actions can be debated, it is indisputable that, had *Greycliffe* maintained her usual course, the collision would never have occurred. Regardless of whether the turn was voluntary or not, if Barnes was unaware his course had altered, as he claimed, this amounts to negligence. The cause of the collision, therefore, must be attributed to *Greycliffe's* helmsman.

Stolen Lives

Let us, however, not forget the victims of this unfortunate accident. What would have become of them if their lives had not been unexpectedly cut short? What would the children have achieved in their lives had they had the opportunity? And what of the young doctor who was already Senior Medical Officer at Garden Island? Where might his career have taken him? Or our first female pilot? What new chapters in Australian aviation history might she have written?

Their lives are now frozen time: their pictures depict faces from the 'decadent twenties', a time when Charlie Chaplin was a star of the silent screen and the 'Charleston' and 'Foxtrot' were all the rage. Hats were standard attire for all; men sported knickerbockers and women wore dresses with low waistlines. Glamour was an important fashion trend.

But they were not destined to experience the devastation of the depression, nor the horror of yet another World War. They would not live to see great triumphs in medicine such as organ transplants and the eradication of many of the world's diseases. Nor would they see the jet age, or watch man landing on the moon live on television. Some never experienced the emotions of falling in love, nor the joys of marrying and having their own children, whilst others left their loves and children behind.

Robbed of a future by a horrific accident they were powerless to prevent, theirs were indeed stolen lives.

One of *Greycliffe's* victims was 49-year-old Millicent M. Bryant, who became the first Australian woman to obtain a pilot's license, just eight months prior to the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* tragedy.

© Reproduced courtesy of the Bryant Family and the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

RMS *Tahiti* passes under the Sydney Harbour Bridge as she returns to Sydney for her final visit on 4 August 1930. Just 14 days later, she lay at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

© Golden Years Collectables, Sydney

Tahiti's stern rides low in the water as she begins to sink. By the time this picture was taken, the passengers had been rescued and were watching her sinking from the safety of the decks of the steamer *Ventura*.

© ScreenSound Australia

❧ Epilogue: The Loss of Tahiti, 1930 ❧

IN August 1930, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, hundreds of miles from inhabited land, *Tahiti's* career came to a rather surprising and unexpected end.

Having completed a scheduled short stay in Sydney, *Tahiti* sailed for Wellington on Thursday, 7 August. Then, following a five-day stay in the New Zealand capital, she set out again on 12 August bound for Rarotonga, Papeete and finally San Francisco.

Under the command of 49-year-old Captain Arthur Thomas Toten, the vessel departed Wellington carrying 128 passengers and 148 crew. Stowed in her hold were 699 bags of mail, eleven bags of parcels and newspapers, and 500 tons of general cargo, including automobiles.

Barely four days later, in the early morning hours of Saturday, 16 August, *Tahiti's* passengers were sleeping soundly in their cabins following the night's entertainment. They were completely oblivious to an imminent change in their travel plans.

Far below them in the dark, cold water, the ship's fate was about to be settled. Without warning, *Tahiti's* port propeller sheared off and was carried away. Twisting violently as it broke free, the propeller, or its associated shaft, ripped a gaping hole in the ship's hull and sank quickly to the bottom.

The first indication of the ship's plight was received by wireless message in Sydney shortly before 3.00 a.m.¹ on Saturday morning. Disabled and drifting out of control in the darkness of the mid Pacific, several hundred miles from the nearest land, *Tahiti* issued an urgent request for assistance.

Within hours, clarification of her precarious situation arrived via Suva Radio,

*...Tahiti approximately 460 miles from Rarotonga; has broken propeller and tailshaft, which has dropped off. Number four hold and engine-room filling; all vessels keep lookout and report if in touch.*²

Penybryn, a Norwegian tramp steamer on her way from Cuba to Auckland with a cargo of sugar, had already passed *Tahiti's* location. However, upon hearing the call for help, she turned around and headed for the liner at full speed.

En route from Sydney to San Francisco, the Matson-Oceanic Line's mail steamer *Ventura* had also heard *Tahiti's* distress signal. Already beyond Pago Pago, the American vessel was some 750 miles north of *Tahiti's* position. Another Union Steamship Company liner *Tofua*, en route from Suva to Tonga, and American freighter *Antinous*, en route from Dunkirk to Noumea, also answered the call and altered course to assist.

When the new day dawned, passengers awoke to the shocking news that their ship was slowly sinking. Throughout the day, whilst they anxiously waited for help to arrive, *Tahiti* continued to slowly fill with water. Some passengers set up private radio transmitters and people crowded around to listen to broadcasts from Sydney about their own plight.

By nightfall on Saturday, the situation was getting serious. With help on its way but still hours off, Toten and his senior officers began to discuss the possibility of

abandoning ship. The vessel's pumps were fighting a losing battle and the crew were becoming tired.

A signal was received from *Tahiti* at around 1.00 a.m. on Sunday morning that the order to abandon ship had been given. However, Toten later reversed his decision when he felt the situation was still safe enough. He reassured authorities they were still holding on and, an hour before daybreak, radioed a further update on the situation.

...Engine-room bulkhead badly bulged and leaking, engine-room under control; No. 3 hold water level with 'tween decks; passengers still aboard; pumps working full bore...³

However, the situation only continued to worsen; shortly after 5.30 a.m., Toten confirmed the inevitable when he reported,

...engine-room beyond control now; if no further word will abandon ship...⁴

It became a race against time; it was not at all certain that *Tahiti* would stay afloat long enough for help to arrive. And yet, another uneasy day of waiting lay ahead of them.

Toten made radio contact with *Penybryn* that morning and was encouraged to hear her expected time of arrival at his position was later that afternoon. *Ventura* also radioed and indicated she expected to reach them by early next morning. All the while, the engine-room bulkheads bulged further and threatened to give way.

Hopes were pinned on the pending arrival of *Penybryn*. All afternoon hundreds of eyes scoured the horizon for a sign of her. However, her progress through the swell was slower than expected and it was not until a little after 8.30 p.m., to the relief of all, that lights were finally sighted in the distance.

Tahiti fired rockets to indicate her exact position, and within an hour the steamer arrived alongside to the cheers of passengers who lined the rails.

However, it was now well after nightfall and, though there was only a light breeze blowing, a heavy swell rocked the two ships. Toten realised a transfer of passengers in these conditions would be a perilous exercise, and therefore decided to keep everyone on board until morning, as long as circumstances allowed it. *Penybryn* stood alongside throughout the night, ready to render immediate assistance should it be required.

The tired crew maintained the overworked pumps all night. By Monday morning, the vessel had developed a bad list and Toten realised there was little hope of her lasting the day. *Antinous* radioed she would reach *Tahiti* by 11.00 a.m., but *Tofua* was still not expected until the evening.

Soon after daybreak, the crew noticed signs that the engine-room bulkhead, strained for so long under the pressure of water behind it, was beginning to give way. Toten realised the time had come and gave the order to abandon ship.

By the time *Ventura* arrived at around 10.00 a.m., five lifeboats of passengers had already been lowered. *Ventura* immediately put down her own lifeboats and, assisted by those of *Penybryn* and *Tahiti*, evacuated everyone from the stricken vessel.

In an orderly and sober manner, the women and children were removed from the foundering liner first, followed by the men, and finally the crew. Fortunately, it was the low season for travelling and although a smaller vessel than *Tahiti*, and carrying her own passengers, *Ventura* still had adequate accommodation for everyone.

❧ The Loss of *Tahiti*, 1930 ❧

Once the passengers were safe, the crew began to salvage light personal luggage and mail. The letter mail was retrieved with the exception of six bags, which fell into the sea during the manoeuvre and sank. A further fifty of the bags were wet by seawater but the remainder was unharmed.

However, *Tahiti* was listing heavily by now, and the decision was made to abandon efforts to rescue the mail. The newspapers, parcels and cargo could not be saved and were left behind.

The Chief Engineer shut off the oil fires and left the pumps operating on the remaining steam in the boilers. Meanwhile, the ship's carpenter smashed several portholes with a sledge-hammer to help her sink.

The last of the crew was transferred to *Ventura* with Captain Toten returning in the final boat. At 1.30 p.m. *Ventura* reported that all passengers and crew were now safely aboard, and *Tahiti's* lifeboats were scuttled.

One life was lost during the transfer, the *Sydney Morning Herald* would later report. As one of the ship's canaries was being handed from a boat up to *Ventura*, the cage was dropped in the sea and sank before it could be retrieved.⁵

Ventura's Master, Captain Meyer, decided to remain at the scene until *Tahiti* finally sank. To hasten her descent, however, Captain Toten and Carpenter Borthwick returned to the vessel once again to open two watertight doors, then hastened to safety.

Minutes later, *Tahiti's* stern lay 400 feet under water, directly below her bow, which still protruded above the surface. There she floated momentarily, her bow pointing skyward. It did not last long. Anything not tethered fell sternwards, and, assisted by the weight of water that rushed in to fill her insides, she was dragged under.

Like a final exhalation before death, steam and water spray gushed from her portholes and ventilators. Then she slipped below the surface in a swirl of foam. Passengers and crew of both vessels lined *Ventura's* rails and watched in silence with hats removed. It is said that some of *Tahiti's* crew wept openly.

Little was left to be seen but a mess of flotsam, intermingled with deck chairs. The time was recorded as 4.42 p.m. on Monday, 18 August 1930, and her position as 24.44° south, 166.15° west.

Ventura proceeded to Pago Pago where she arrived at 1.00 p.m. the following day. Treated like a hero, the 6000-ton steamer was greeted by ships' whistles and the naval station's siren as she entered the harbour. There she disembarked *Tahiti's* crew and the Rarotonga and Papeete-bound passengers. *Tofua* diverted to Pago Pago to pick up these passengers, whilst *Ventura* resumed her voyage to San Francisco, taking with her *Tahiti's* remaining United States-bound passengers. Captain Toten and his crew were then returned to Auckland.

The masters and crews of *Tahiti*, *Ventura* and *Penybryn* were praised in the aftermath. Newspapers on both sides of the Pacific wrote of their cool handling of the situation and prevention of any loss of human life.

*Passengers speak in glowing terms of the coolness and fortitude of Captain Toten and the heroic efforts of the engineers and all the crew in keeping the ship afloat.*⁶

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

Less than three years after she collided with *Greycliffe* in Port Jackson, the Union Steamship Company's infamous Royal Mail Steamer *Tahiti* was gone. Her career had spanned just 26 years.

In World War I, she was lucky to have survived when a torpedo fired at her skimmed past her bow. Later she survived a number of other accidents and incidents during her civilian life. It was, perhaps, all the more ironic that despite these episodes, and the untold sadness and horror she had brought to the lives of Sydneysiders, *Tahiti* effectively committed suicide and sent herself to the ocean floor.

Rescued from the *Tahiti* as she sank on 18 August 1930, this letter was damaged by seawater during the salvage operation. It was stamped by the United States postal service in San Francisco "Salvaged from S.S. Tahiti Lost at Sea". © Greg Sutherland

Appendix I

❧ Greycliffe's Passengers - The Victims ❧

Note: Addresses refer to those given in 1927-28

ASHER, Eliza Louisa, 56

Address: 'Valpre', Serpentine Parade, Vacluse

Occupation: Spinster, housewife

Born: Kilby, Leicestershire, England, 1870, to Henry Asher, a grazier, and Emma Asher, the youngest of four children; siblings were Annie Marie (born 1859), Frederick (born 1863), and Daniel (born 1866, married Hannah Drew in Berrima, N.S.W., 1889)

Possessions when found: Two gold rings and two dress rings (one with amethysts)

Formal identification: By her nephew, Charles Asher (son of her brother Daniel), a Council Overseer for Campbelltown Municipality, residing at Lithgow Street, Campbelltown, SRNSW 2/10498, page 43

Funeral notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 November 1927

Funeral: 14 November 1927, buried in South Head Cemetery

Note: Owned land at Dee Why Heights valued at £300

Injuries: Right arm broken at elbow, right hand crushed

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 151018

BARKER, Alfred Edward, 53

Address: 'Malua', 41 Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Architect

Born: Marrickville, N.S.W., 1874, to Edward Cornelius Barker (1848-1933) and Clara Louise Barker, nee Board (1853-1942), the eldest of six children; siblings were Herbert William (born 1876, married Eleanor S. Eve, 1908), Edith C. (1877-1901), Leslie Horace B. (born 1881, married Olive L. Brown, 1928), Beatrice (born 1885), and Pearl G. (born 1889, married Alfred H. Peake, 1914)

Spouse and Children: Married Mary Fahey (1877-1938), daughter of Francis and Harriet Fahey, in N.S.W. in 1909; had children Joan (born Ashfield, August 1911) and Judith (born Woollahra, 14 June 1915, married James Alfred Abbott, Parramatta, 1945)

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A gold watch, gold cufflinks, a savings bank book, a pocket book, spectacles in a case, a pipe, a slide rule, a silver pencil, pens, a [pocket?] knife, a handkerchief, and 5s 1d in coins

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, Arthur Reginald Brown, of 166 Victoria Street, Charing Cross, Waverley, SRNSW 2/10498, page 31

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: Monday, 7 November 1927; buried in the family vault in the Church of England section of Rookwood Cemetery, Section 1

Injuries: Two lacerated fingers

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 151560

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Claims: His widow Mary sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

BARRY, William Lambie, 36

Address: c/- Mrs. H. B. Garratt, 'Ballina', Clarke Street, Vaucluse

Occupation: Fireman at Garden Island

Born: Victoria, 1891, to George and Elizabeth Barry

Body recovered: Found floating in Elizabeth Bay and recovered by the Water Police on the morning of 11 November 1927

Possessions when found: A metal watch and leather chain, a pocket knife with a Yale key attached, 2s 11d in cash, a leather purse, a metal chain and ferry tickets

Formal identification: By Naval Dockyard Policeman, George Stewart, and cousin Robert Ambrose Cassidy of 6 Victoria Street, Ashfield, SRNSW 2/10498, page 44

Funeral notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 12 November 1927, buried in South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 316

Cause of death: Drowning

BLOOM, Charles Phillip, 62

Address: 'Sea View', Clarke Street, Vaucluse

Occupation: Foreman Painter at Garden Island

Born: Newbury, Victoria, 1864, to Philip and Jeanette Bloom, nee Coombes

Spouse and Child: Married Jessie Adam Macarthur (born 1883) in Woollahra, 1924; had son Phillip Arthur George (born 1925)

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: £14 2s, a gold watch on a metal chain, a chain with three keys, a tobacco pouch, a wallet, a note book, a tobacco box and pipe, and a pair of gold cufflinks

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, George Allen, a watchmaker and jeweller of 113 Stanmore Road, Petersham, SRNSW 2/10498, page 30

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by Canon Beck, then buried in the Church of England section at South Head Cemetery, beside the grave of Elsie Ramsay [see below]

Newspaper report: Paragraph on the funeral and a list of mourners in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149901

Claims: His widow Jessie sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

BRYANT, Millicent Maude, 49

Address: 'Trevena', Coolong Road, Vaucluse

Occupation: Australia's first female pilot, widow

Born: Millicent Maude Harvey, in Wellington, N.S.W., 1878, to Edmund George Harvey and Georgiana Sarah Harvey, nee Bartlett (died 1932), the oldest of at least nine children; siblings were Edith Bartlett (born 1880), Faulkner Hope (born 1881, married Annie E. Provins, 1905), Macquarie (born 1883, married Silvia M. Jones, 1908), Olive (born 1885), John (1888-1889), George S. (born 1890, married Eileen M. Hundy, 1911), Arthur Allen (born 1894, enlisted Wellington, N.S.W., and served as a Private in the

☞ Greycliffe's Passengers - The Victims ☞

17th Battalion AIF; died of wounds in Sydney on 21 August 1915, and buried in Wellington), Mary (1897-1897), and possibly one other

Spouse and Children: Married Edward James Bryant (son of James A. and Caroline Bryant, died 15 February 1926), in Wellington, N.S.W., 1900; mother of George Edward I. Bryant (born Manly, 1901, married Lilian S. Strang, 1927), John H. Bryant (born Manly, 1903, married Nancy B. Rogerson, 1933), and Bowen A. Bartlett Bryant (born Manly, 1908, married Olive P. H. Fitzhardinge 1934)

Possessions when found: A wrist watch and a gold braid chain

Formal identification: By her son, Bowen A. B. Bryant, a student of the same address, SRNSW 2/10498, page 344

Newspaper reports: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927; picture and paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; paragraph about the funeral and a list of mourners in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927; picture and paragraph in *The Bulletin*, 10 November 1927

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927; buried in the Church of England section of Manly Cemetery; funeral procession escorted by five aircraft, crewed by Captain E. W. Leggatt, Captain R. M. King, Mr S. L. Tyler, Mr H. W. Ross, Mr T. O'Dea, and Mr H. T. Hammond

Note: On 28 March 1927, she became the first woman to obtain a pilot's licence in Australia. She paid about £1 per hour for flying tuition, then around one week's wages for many people, and was about to commence an advanced flying course

Note: Attended the wedding of her oldest son, George, a week before the accident. He was honeymooning in Tasmania when it occurred and was unable to return in time to attend the funeral. As her second oldest son, John, was in England, only her youngest son, Bowen, was able to attend the ceremony

Injuries: Abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149558

Claims: Her oldest son George sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on behalf of her youngest son Bowen (a minor and therefore legal dependant) in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CARROLL, John ('Jack') Stinson, 37

Address: 23 Cliff Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Painter at Garden Island

Born: England, 1890, to George S. and Jane Carroll; brother of William [who also emigrated to Australia]

Spouse and Children: Married May Victoria Alice Canning (1895-1943) in West Ham, England, ca. 1918; had children Robert George (born 1919), John Charles (born 1920) and Betty (born 1927)

Body recovered: 13 November 1927

Possessions when found: A wallet, two Kodak film cases, photographs, a receipt book, a receipt card, a signet ring, a gold pendant with the Australian Coat of Arms, a Returned Serviceman's Badge and five studs

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, W. A. Benson, SRNSW 2/10498, page 44

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 November 1927

Funeral: 14 November 1927, buried in South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 309

☛ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ☛

Note: Enlisted in the Australian Army Medical Corps on 13 August 1915 and served in World War I as a Lance Corporal, No. 3042; discharged 5 March 1919

Note: Life assurance with the Prudential Life Insurance Company of England for £50

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 154299

Claims: His widow May sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CARROLL, Mabel ('Madge'), 54

Address: 'Glenore', 31 The Crescent, Vacluse

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Mabel Bayley in North Sydney, 1873, to Marshall Bayley (married 1855, died 1895) and Sarah Annie Pellett Bayley, nee Brindley (died 1912) the youngest of ten children; siblings were Caroline Van H. (1856-1941), Helen B. (1857-1930), Marshall (born 1859, married Theresa Elizabeth Pringle, 1887), Harry M. (1863-1931, married Ethel J. Byrnes, 1891), Walter Paterson (1861-1938), Florence (born 1864), Edith (1866-1908), Constance (born 1868), and George M. (1870-1878)

Spouse and Child: Married Hubert Henry Carroll (died 24 February 1960) in Sydney in 1904; mother of Maxwell Smithers Carroll (born Mosman, N.S.W., 1906)

Possessions when found: A silver bracelet, a gold wedding ring and a wrist watch

Formal identification: See SRNSW 2/10498, page 36

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by Reverend J. F. Cherry and assisted by Archdeacon Charlton; mourners included the Mayor of Vacluse; buried in the Church of England section of South Head Cemetery

Newspaper report: Funeral in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Injuries: Long deep cut on forehead and left arm, bruising on chest and abdomen

Cause of death: Injuries

Claims: Her widower Hubert sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CONNER, Edwin Arthur, 58

Address: 'Clifton', 10 Salisbury Place, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Engine Room Artificer with the Royal Australian Navy at Garden Island

Born: Portsmouth, England, to Edward and Rebecca Conner

Spouse: Eleanor Eliza Conner (died Woollahra, 1943)

Body recovered: 24 November 1927

Possessions when found: 1s in cash, a pocket knife and letters

Formal identification: By his son-in-law, Dental Surgeon Dr. Henry Claude Morrison, of the same address, SRNSW 2/10498, page 648

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 November 1927

Funeral: 25 November 1927; buried at South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 312

Note: Life assurance with AMP

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149905

Claim: His widow Eleanor sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

☞ *Greycliffe's Passengers - The Victims* ☞

COOMBES, Elizabeth, 63

Address: 'Kinross', 36 Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Housewife, retired

Born: Elizabeth McCulloch in Glasgow, Scotland, 24 September 1864, to John McCulloch (1821-1900, born Fearn, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland; joiner) and Euphemia R. McCulloch, nee Ross (1831-1913, married 25 January 1850, Fearn, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland); siblings were Mary Ann (born Glasgow, 1851), Catherine ('Kate', born Glasgow, 1856, married James Campbell in N.S.W. in 1889; no relation to the Judge presiding over the Court of Marine Enquiry), Charles William Ross (1858-1901, born Glasgow; joiner), and Mary (born 1866, married John Ferguson)

Note: The family migrated to Australia aboard the ship *Port Pirie* in 1886. They departed London, England, on 14 June 1886 and arrived in Sydney on 7 September 1886, the voyage taking 85 days

Spouse and Children: Married William Harrower Coombes, warehouseman (born Candleriggs, Scotland, 1863, died Sydney, 29 December 1948), in Paddington, N.S.W., in 1889 [The surname is recorded as *Combs* when he married Elizabeth and at the birth of their first child, as *Combes* at the birth of their other children, but as *Coombes* at Elizabeth's death in 1927]; mother of William Harrower M., (born 1890; salesman; enlisted in the Army, 24 August 1914, served as Driver, No. 588, in the 1st Australian Field Artillery Brigade and returned to Australia 6 October 1918), Charles Arncliffe Coombes (born Arncliffe, N.S.W., July 1892; clerk with the *Sydney Morning Herald*; married Jessie E. Reeves in 1915, and resided in Eden Street, Arncliffe; enlisted in the Army, 9 September 1915, served as Gunner, No. 10134, in the 5th Australian Field Artillery Brigade; killed in the Second Battle of Bullecourt, France, 13 May 1917, and buried in Vaulx Hill Cemetery, Vaulx Vraucourt, Pas de Calais, France), James Campbell Coombes (1897-1989; married Mary D. Stephenson, 1926), and Gladstone Ross (1898-1990)

Formal identification: By her husband, William H. Coombes, SRNSW 2/10498, page 35

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: 5 November 1927, conducted by Reverend Hugh Paton, then buried at South Head Cemetery in Section N, Row 7, Grave 298

Newspaper report: List of mourners printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Injuries: Abrasions to face and body

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 152710

Claim: Her widower William sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £1,500 damages [see Appendix X]

CORBY, Mary, 29

Address: c/- Mrs Costello, Biniguy Railway Siding Township, 36km east of Moree, N.S.W.

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Mary McNamara at 'Riverside', Pallamallawa, near Moree, N.S.W., 1897, to John McNamara (1867-1945) and Mary Ann McNamara, nee Haley (1877-1954; married 1895), one of ten children; siblings were Walter (born 1896, enlisted in the Army in Narrabri, N.S.W., 19 February 1916, served as Corporal, No. 3310, in the 1st Australian Light Horse, and returned to Australia on 13 March 1919), Muriel (born 1899, married George R. Quinn, 1919), James (born 1901, married Ruby A. Moffett, 1926), Susannah (born 1904, married Henry A. Adams, 1926), Elsie (born 1909, married Francis J. Maunder,

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1933), Leslie (born 1912, married Kathleen M. Peachey, 1934), Keith (born 1916, married Desme Haley, 1934), John (born 1916), and Dorothy
Spouse and Child: Married John Christian Corby [see Appendix II] in 1920, and gave birth to the Noreen Kathleen Corby [see below] in 1921
Body recovered: 4 November 1927
Formal identification: By her husband, John Corby, SRNSW 2/10498, page 17
Funeral: Her body was sent back home to Moree by train, escorted by her husband John Corby; buried in Moree Cemetery with her daughter after Requiem Mass in the Catholic Church, Moree, on 7 November 1927
Newspaper reports: Articles on the Corby family and the funeral printed in the *North West Champion*, Moree, 7 and 10 November 1927
Notes: Educated at the Convent School, Moree, and employed for a time as a Nurse at Fairview Private Hospital in Moree; could not swim
Cause of death: Drowning
Probate record: Administration NSW 151701
Claim: Her widower John sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CORBY, Noreen Kathleen, 6

Address: c/- Mrs Costello, Biniguy Railway Siding Township, N.S.W.
Occupation: Schoolgirl
Born: Moree, N.S.W., September 1921, to John Christian Corby and the above Mary Corby, nee McNamara
Body recovered: 4 November 1927
Formal identification: By her father, John Corby, SRNSW 2/10498, page 17
Funeral: Her body was sent back home to Moree by train, escorted by her father John Corby; buried in Moree Cemetery with her mother after Requiem Mass in the Catholic Church, Moree, on 7 November 1927
Newspaper report: Articles on the Corby family and funeral printed in the *North West Champion*, Moree, 7 and 10 November 1927
Cause of death: Drowning
Claim: Her father John sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CROOK, Donald John Clarendon, 2

Address: 58 Allison Street, Elsternwick, Victoria
Occupation: None; toddler
Born: Victoria, Australia, 29 July 1925, to John Thomas Crook, and Ruby Crook, nee Frost [see below]; grandson of Florence Frost [see below]
Body recovered: 4 November 1927
Formal identification: By his father, John Thomas Crook, SRNSW 2/10498, page 19
Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried in Melbourne General Cemetery in Church of England section L, graves 760/761
Newspaper report: Paragraph on the funeral printed in *The Argus*, 8 November 1927
Note: Visiting family friend, William Richard Nicholls, a newsagent of 137 Parramatta Road, Annandale, N.S.W., with his mother and grandmother, but staying at 8 Northumberland Avenue, Stanmore
Injuries: Abrasions on forehead
Cause of death: Drowning

CROOK, Ruby Audas, 29

Address: 58 Allison Street, Elsternwick, Victoria

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Ruby Audas Frost in West Melbourne, Victoria, 1899, to James Wales Audas, a civil servant of 233 Williams Road, and Florence Moss Frost [see below]. As her parents were unmarried at the time, Ruby was given her mother's surname, whilst her father's surname became her middle name

Spouse and Child: Married John ('Jack') Thomas Francis Crook in All Saints Church, St. Kilda, Victoria, on 3 December 1924; mother of Donald John Clarendon Crook (born 1925) [see above]

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A gold wrist watch, a string of pearls, a five-stone diamond ring, a wedding ring, a black purse and £9 in notes

Formal identification: By her husband, John Thomas Crook, SRNSW 2/10498, page 19

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried in Melbourne General Cemetery in Church of England section L, graves 760/761

Newspaper report: Paragraph on the funeral printed in *The Argus*, 8 November 1927

Note: Visiting friend William Richard Nicholls, a newsagent of 137 Parramatta Road, Annandale, with her son and mother; staying at 8 Northumberland Avenue, Stanmore

Injuries: Abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Series 221, No. 356, Administration in Victoria, 18 April 1928

Note: Her widower, John, later remarried

FORBES, Robert, 62

Address: 'Harston', 24 Cliff Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Lamp Trimmer in the Royal Australian Navy, based on the R.A.N. fleet auxiliary vessel *Kurumba*

Born: Lybster, northern Scotland, brother of John, Margaret and Ann Forbes, and John and Elizabeth Bell [all of whom were also in Australia]

Note: Not married

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: 7s 3d in coins, a silver cigarette case, seaman's discharge papers and a handkerchief

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, John Bell, a marine engineer of 'Tamar', 10 Ebsworth Road, Rose Bay, SRNSW 2/10498, page 23

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by Reverend John Edwards, then buried at South Head Cemetery

Newspaper report: Paragraph on the funeral in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Injuries: Wound to back of head

Cause of death: Drowning

FROST, Florence Moss, 58

Address: 58 Allison Street, Elsternwick, Victoria

Occupation: Retired

Born: Victoria, 1869, to Charles Lee and Ann(ie) Frost, nee Cardon (married 1860), the fourth of ten children; siblings were Charles Alfred (born 1862), Ada Annie (born 1864),

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Ernest John Lee (1868-1868), Beatrice Maud Moss (1870-1871), Eliza Adelaide Blanche (born 1873), Caroline Maria (1874-1874), Elizabeth Martha (born 1875), William Robert (born 1878), and August Adolphus (born 1880)

Child: Ruby Audas Frost, born in West Melbourne, Victoria, 1899, by Florence's partner, James Wales Audas, a civil servant of 233 Williams Road. They were not married at the time

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A necklet, two brooches, a purse, £7 in notes and a pearl necklace

Formal identification: By her son-in-law, John Thomas Crook, SRNSW 2/10498, page 19

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried in Melbourne General Cemetery in Church of England section L, graves 760/761

Newspaper report: Paragraph on the funeral printed in *The Argus*, 8 November 1927

Note: Visiting family friend William Richard Nicholls, a newsagent of 137 Parramatta Road, Annandale, N.S.W., with her daughter Ruby Crook and grandson Donald [see the two entries for Crook, above]; staying at 8 Northumberland Avenue, Stanmore

Injuries: Abrasions on face

Cause of death: Drowning

GARRETT, Charles, 44

Address: 'Marion', 1 Cambridge Avenue, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Optical Instrument Maker at Garden Island

Born: London, England, 1883, to George Garrett

Spouse and child: Married Mabel Victoria Bayliss in Paddington, Middlesex, England, in 1912; had daughter Doris May (born England, 1913)

Note: Family emigrated to Australia (possibly a Navy transfer) shortly before the accident

Body recovered: 10 November 1927, when it floated to the surface near the wreck site

Possessions when found: £15 15s in cash, an ashtray, a pocket knife, a folding ruler, a broken fountain pen and holder, keys, a pair of cufflinks, two collar studs, a wallet, two notebooks and papers

Formal identification: By Constable George Stewart of the Naval Dockyard Police, residing at 125 Wells Street, Newtown, SRNSW 2/10498, page 39

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927

Funeral: 11 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery

Note: His daughter, Doris May Garrett, was also on the ferry with him, but survived [see Appendix II]; owned no property and possessed no life assurance

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 154278

Claims: His widow Mabel sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

GIRAUD, Margery Ellen, 13

Address: 'Nibeah', 124 Hopetoun Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Born: Carlton, N.S.W., 1914, the only child of Archibald Percy Giraud, accountant, and Ida May Giraud, nee Tate (1889-1919); granddaughter of Thomas and Rebecca Tate of Stanmore, niece of H. & C. Tate of Randwick and Coogee, and Mr & Mrs D. R. Cunningham of Stanmore. Her father Percy remarried in 1924 to Amy M. Phelps

Possessions when found: A gold bangle with a ferry ticket attached

Formal identification: By her father, Archibald P. Giraud, SRNSW 2/10498, page 34

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Death and funeral notices: Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927; buried in the family plot in the Church of England section of Rookwood Cemetery, Section AAAA, Grave 1136

Note: Life assurance with AMP for ca. £70

Injuries: Severe injury to left side of head, bruising

Cause of death: Injuries

HEDGES, Frank Henry, 21

Address: 'Cliffside', Clovelly Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Blacksmith at Garden Island

Born: England, 1906, to Samuel Hedges, a night watchman (died 1930), and Caroline Hedges

Spouse and children: Married Victoria Alexandra Symonds (died 12 August 1985) in Newtown, 1926; had two children, identity unknown

Body recovered: 11 November 1927

Possessions when found: 1s 1d in cash and a handkerchief with the initials 'FH' embroidered on it

Formal identification: By his father, Sam Hedges, SRNSW 2/10498, page 42

Death and funeral notices: Sydney Morning Herald, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 12 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 308

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149331

Claim: His widow Victoria sued the Union Steamship Company for damages in 1928 [see Appendix X]

HILL, Agnes, 11

Address: 'Wallasey', 154 Hopetoun Avenue, Vaucluse

Occupation: Sydney Girls' High School pupil

Born: Lancashire, England, 1915, to Samuel Hill, plumber, and Emma Hill; younger sister of Dora (born Lancashire, 1914)

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: None

Formal identification: By her father, Samuel Hill, SRNSW 2/10498, page 24

Funeral notice: Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Saturday, 5 November 1927, then transported by train to Rookwood Cemetery, where she was buried in Congregational (Independent) Section K, Grave 534. The grave is unmarked; there is no headstone

Note: Her older sister, Dora, was also on the ferry with her, but survived [see Appendix II]; possessed life assurance for £9

Injuries: Cuts on knee and hand

Cause of death: Drowning

JONES, William, 70-75

Address: 39 Coolong Road, Vaucluse

Occupation: Gardener

Born: Ireland; last address outside Australia was Athlone, Ireland

Spouse and children: Married to Ann Jones, of 15 Connaught Street, Athlone, Ireland; had children Gertrude Withers (resident in Double Bay in 1928), William (resident in Ballymurray, Ireland, in 1928), Rebecca Oliver (resident in Mexico in 1928), James

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(resident in California, U.S.A., in 1928), George (resident in London, England, in 1928), Annie Robinson (resident in New York, U.S.A., in 1928), Richard (resident in Athlone, Ireland, in 1928), Louis (resident in India in 1928), and Lillian Weir (resident in London, England, in 1928)

Body recovered: 10 November 1927

Possessions when found: A collar pin and stud, 13s 4½d in cash, a nickel open face luminous dial watch, two keys on a ring, a leather purse, a grocery list and a bill from the Electric Light Power Supply Company

Identifying characteristics: As noted by the Coroner - 5ft. 6 in. tall, well nourished, medium build, short grey hair, clipped moustache, tweed trousers, white shirt, white and blue striped soft collar, grey cotton socks, grey braces, black knitted tie, lace-up size 8 tan shoes, left hand appeared deformed

Formal identification: By a friend, Alfred Meeks, of 'The Hut', Coolong Road, Vacluse, SRNSW 2/10498, page 35

Death notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 11 November 1927, cremated at Rookwood Cemetery and ashes scattered; no plaque or memorial exists

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 153040

Claims: His daughter Gertrude, as Executrix of his estate, sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £2,500 damages [see Appendix X]

LANDERS, Bernard William Paul, 11½

Address: 'Halidon', 10 Davies Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolboy

Born: Darlinghurst, N.S.W., 1916, to Paul Landers, Master of Languages at Sydney School of Arts, and Mary Rhoda Landers, nee Pettit (married 1915); brother of Francis and Sybil

Body recovered: 10 November 1927

Possessions when found: 4d in coins, concert tickets and raffle tickets

Formal identification: By his father, Paul Landers, SRNSW 2/10498, page 37

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927

Funeral: 11 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 306

Newspaper report: Two pictures of the funeral in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 12 November 1927

Note: A copy of a letter from Paul Landers to the Coroner is held by State Records N.S.W., SRNSW 2/10547

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: His father Paul sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £200 damages [see Appendix X]

LANKSHEAR, Leonard ('Lennie') Francis, 15

Address: 'Bokhara', Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolboy at Sydney Technical High School

Born: Marrickville, N.S.W., 1912, to Charles Joseph Lankshear (born 1880, married 1908) and Gertrude Victoria Lankshear, nee Matthews (1881-1951); brother of Selwyn William (1909-1990; married Phyllis Ruth Garside, 1940; moved to Newcastle with the Railways)

Body recovered: 6 November 1927

Possessions when found: 2s 5d in coins, a fountain pen, a pocket knife, a lead pencil, and papers in a school case

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Formal identification: By his uncle, Charles Matthews, of Ethne Avenue, Randwick, SRNSW 2/10498, page 28

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 302

Note: A close friend of Ken Horler, Ken Berliner and Leslie Brook, he was one of the few local boys who never learnt to swim¹; last seen alive and struggling in the water by Leslie Brook

Injuries: Cuts on left cheek

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: His father Charles sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £250 damages [see Appendix X]

LAURENCE, Betty Leonore, 13

Address: 'Bonheur', 30 Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Born: Sydney, 1914, to Owen Laurence, lapidary, and Dora A. E. Laurence

Body recovered: 6 November 1927

Possessions when found: A wrist watch, a ferry ticket, a purse, 3d in coins, a key, a photograph and papers

Formal identification: By her father, Owen Laurence, SRNSW 2/10498, page 27

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery

Injuries: Abrasions on forehead and knees

Cause of death: Drowning

LEE-BROWN, Robert, Dr., 67

Address: 'Greystanes', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Prisons Medical Officer at Long Bay Gaol for fifteen years, also in private practice

Born: Amhurst, Victoria, 1861, to Robert Lee Brown and Loveday Brown, nee Williams (married 1859)

Spouse and children: Married Ada Mary Kingsbury [see Appendix II]; had children Robert ('Bobby') Kingsbury Lee-Brown (Doctor, in practice in Vacluse in 1927; killed in an aircraft accident in 1934), Olga L. (born Malvern, Victoria, 1904, married Frank Leverrier in 1932), and Alcyone Whately (born Dandenong, Vic., 1900, died Mosman, 1989)

Body recovered: 11 November 1927

Possessions when found: £24 3s in cash, a gold ring, cufflinks, two studs, a gold wrist watch, two pencils, a fountain pen, a gold matchbox, a cigarette maker, a nail file, a cigarette holder, a cigar cutter, a bunch of keys with two trinkets attached, an empty spectacles case and a second set of spectacles in a case

Formal identification: By his son, Dr Robert K. Lee-Brown, of Robertson Road, Centennial Park, SRNSW 2/10498, page 41

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 12 November 1927, cremated at Rookwood Cemetery

Newspaper reports: Career summarised in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927: picture in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927, picture in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927

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Note: Earned £520 *per annum* from his prison work and £300 *per annum* for his private practice; Patron of the Moore Park Golf Club; possessed life assurance with AMP for £200; owned property to the value of £9000

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Probate NSW 145533 (Listed as 'Brown, Robert Lee')

Claims: His widow Ada sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

PARADICE, William Edward John, 30

Address: 'Moorabinda', The Crescent, Vaucluse

Occupation: Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander, R.A.N.; Senior Medical Officer at Garden Island and Medical Officer in Charge of the naval wing of Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick

Born: Burwood, N.S.W., 21 February 1897, to William Henry Paradise, a sub-accountant with the AMP Society, and Lily Paradise, nee Dowling (married Burwood, 1894); siblings were Dorothy Lily (born 1900, married Clive B. Wilkinson, 1926) and Franklin ('Frank') Arthur Henry (22 September 1907-1987, served as a Lieutenant, No. NX32192, in the Australian Army's 2/4 Pioneer Battalion, June 1940 to August 1944)

Spouse and children: Married Kate ('Kitty') Carlyle Houston (1900-1995) in 1925; had children William John Houston Paradise (born Sydney, 2 July 1926; served with the Royal Australian Navy as a Sub-Lieutenant from January 1945 to January 1947, No. S/9916) and Jacqueline Houston Paradise (born in Sydney after her father's death, on 7 June 1928)

Career: Educated at Fort Street, then Sydney University and graduated 1920 MB ChM; joined the Royal Australian Navy on 1 August 1921 as a Surgeon Lieutenant, promoted to Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander on 1 August 1926; Entomologist; President of the Microscopical Society and the biological section of the Zoological Society; conducted a scientific study on the Sir Edward Pellew Islands whilst aboard H.M.A.S. *Geranium* in 1923. His report, dated 1924, is held by the National Archives of Australia in Canberra, NT1924/4142

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: £16 5s 11½d in cash, seven keys on a key ring, a ferry ticket, a university badge, a cheque book, a stamp case, a tie pin, gold cufflinks, and a fountain pen

Formal identification: 15 November 1927, by his father, William H. Paradise, of 'Harada', Lane Cove Road, Chatswood, who took the opportunity to thank the divers and Water Police, SRNSW 2/10498, page 20

Funeral notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Death notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: Private funeral held on Saturday, 5 November 1927, at St. Mark's Church of England, Darling Point, followed by a burial with full military honours at South Head Cemetery; buried in Section N, Row 7, Grave 285

Newspaper reports: Career summarised in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927; picture and career summarised in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; picture in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927; reports on the funeral and lists of mourners in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927; picture of Funeral Cortege leaving St. Mark's, Darling Point, in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927; picture and paragraph in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927

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Note: Phoned his wife on the afternoon of the accident to say he would travel to Circular Quay to buy something before coming home, but apparently changed his mind and took his usual ferry to Vaucluse instead; life assurance with AMP for £1000

Injuries: Abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149077

Claim: His widow Kate sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £20,000 damages, by far the greatest single amount sought by any party [see Appendix X]

Note: Kate Paradise moved with her children to Elizabeth Bay Road, Elizabeth Bay, in 1928, and to Victoria Road, Double Bay, by 1933

PUERNELL, Florence Adeline, 52

Address: 'Hawthorne', Robertson Place, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Widow, housewife

Born: Florence Adeline Shakeshaft, in Moonta, South Australia, 11 December 1874, to Richard Shakeshaft and Lydia Ann Shakeshaft, nee Wilton; older sister of Lydia Martha (born 4 September 1876)

Spouse and children: Married Edwin Purnell, electrical engineer, in 1899 (died 17 May 1909), and had children Maxwell Wallington (born Moonta, S.A., 24 January 1902, married Ida J. Dyker, Moree, N.S.W., 1933), Cyril Wilton (born Moonta, 4 December 1903, served with the Australian Army from November 1940 to April 1943, as a Lance Corporal in the 25th Garrison Battalion, No. S679), and Donald (born Moonta, 19 June 1905, died 8 July 1905). Ironically, her husband Edwin's death in Adelaide in 1909 was also followed by a Coronial Inquest

Possessions when found: Two rings

Formal identification: By W. R. Clark of 26 Parsley Road, Vaucluse, SRNSW 2/10498, page 33

Death notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried in South Head Cemetery

Note: In 1910, the family moved from Charles Street, Kensington, S.A., to 161 The Parade, Norwood, S.A., and then, in 1911, to Sydney

Injuries: Abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

RAGG, John Godfrey Simmons, Captain, 58

Address: 33 Chamberlain Avenue, Rose Bay

Occupation: Retired Master Mariner

Born: Marlborough, New Zealand, 1870, to John Ragg

Spouse and child: Married to Isabella Ragg, had at least one (unidentified) daughter

Body recovered: 11 November 1927

Possessions when found: 7s 4d in cash, a pocket book, a receipt in the name of J. Ragg, a metal watch and chain, a pair of spectacles in a case and papers

Formal identification: By his son-in-law, Henry Landon Smith, of the same address, SRNSW 2/10498, page 67

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 12 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: His widow Isabella sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

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RAMSAY, Elsie Georgina, 38

Address: 158 Hopetoun Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Elsie Georgina Cormack in Sydney, 1890, to Alexander and Louisa Miriam Cormack, the eldest of four children; her siblings were Stuart George Keith (born in North Sydney, 1894; enlisted in the 13th Battalion AIF on 23 August 1915 and served as Private, No. 5997; killed in action in the First Battle of Bullecourt, on 11 April 1917 and buried in Villers-Bretonneux War Cemetery, France), Gladys A. M. (born 1897, married Charles P. Noonan in Woollahra, 1927), and Madge A. M. (born 1902, married Arthur Turner in Woollahra, 1928)

Spouse and children: Wife of Albert James Ramsay, carpenter, and mother of Betty and Stuart David (born Sydney, 4 April 1924, served as a Private in the Australian Army, 4th Australian Infantry Battalion, from September 1944 to March 1947, No. QX62118)

Rescue: Delivered semi-conscious to hospital on 3 November 1927, suffering from shock and the effects of immersion; given a treatment of hypodermic injections, hot blankets and stimulants; began to improve, but then collapsed and died at 7.15 p.m. that same evening

Formal identification: SRNSW 2/10498, pages 10 and 21

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Conducted by Reverend W. H. Lewis on 5 November 1927, then buried at South Head Cemetery

Newspaper report: Report on the funeral and a list of mourners in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Note: Of 'robust constitution' (Coronial Inquest); possessed life assurance with the Mutual Life and Citizens Insurance Company for £50

Cause of death: Acute pulmonary oedema from the effects of immersion

Claims: Her widower Albert sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £2,000 damages [see Appendix X]

REID, Charles William, Dr, MB ChM, Edin., 57

Address: 'Darnley', The Crescent, Vacluse

Occupation: Chief Quarantine Officer of N.S.W.

Born: Orange, N.S.W., 9 February 1870, to Peter and Mary Reid, nee Robb (married 1866), the third of nine children; siblings were James Alexander (1867-1940), Jane E. (born 1868), Ellen M. (born 1871), Elspeth Christina (born 1876), David George (born 1878), Violet Maggie (born 1880), Robert S. (1882-1926), and John Finlay (1884-1911)

Spouse and children: Married Elsie Mary Lane (13 July 1874-2 August 1930) in Orange, N.S.W., in 1901; had children Hugh Willoughby (clerk; born Goulburn, 24 February 1902, married Ida J. Reid in Woollahra, 1927, served with the Australian Army from September 1942 to March 1946, when he was demobilised as a Major with the 5th Australian Labour Group Headquarters), Kathleen M. M. (born Woollahra, 1905) and Ronald (no further details known)

Career: Graduated in Edinburgh; held the position of Port Health Officer prior to his position as Chief Quarantine Officer; with the quarantine service 30 years

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A gold watch and chain, gold cuff links, £2 10s in notes, 13s 3d in coins, and 3½ inch spectacles in a case

Formal identification: By his brother, James A. Reid, a Mining Engineer of 'Strathaird', East Crescent Street, McMahon's Point, SRNSW 2/10498, page 58

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Death and funeral notices: Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Held at his residence on Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by Rev. John Edwards of the Presbyterian Church, Rose Bay, then buried at South Head Cemetery

Newspaper reports: Career summarised in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927; picture in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; lists of mourners in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Note: 'One of the best known Commonwealth officers and doctors in Sydney'²; always took the same ferry home and sat in the men's smoking saloon, a close friend of Dr Robert Lee-Brown

Injuries: Abrasions on forehead

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Probate NSW 148922

Claims: His widow Elsie sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £8,000 damages [see Appendix X]

RENTON, William Edwin, 57

Address: 35 Roberts Street, Rose Bay

Occupation: Chief Petty Officer in the Royal Australian Navy; Chief Shipwright, based at H.M.A.S. *Penguin*, the Shore Base at Garden Island

Born: Belfast, Ireland, in 1870, to James and Georgina Renton

Spouse and children: Husband of Maud Renton; father of William Reginald James (born 1892; clerk; married Sylvia Ellen McGilvery, 1939), an unidentified son (born 1908), Georgina Iris S. (born 1909; married George E. Hardy, 1935), and Edwin Charles (born in East Brisbane, 26 September 1913; married Grace Louise Martin, 1937; served as a Sergeant, No. NX83892, in the Australian Army's 2/2 Field Ambulance from January 1942 to January 1946)

Possessions when found: £4 5s 1d in cash, spectacles in a case and a bunch of keys

Formal identification: By his son, William R. J. Renton, SRNSW 2/10498, page 18

Funeral notice: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Held on Saturday, 5 November 1927, at St. Paul's Church of England, Old South Head Road, Rose Bay, conducted by Reverend W. E. Maltby, then buried in the Church of England section of South Head Cemetery; additional memorial plaque on family vault in Rookwood Cemetery

Newspaper reports: Picture and paragraph in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927; a paragraph explaining how one of Renton's sons learnt of his death appears in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927; reports on the funeral in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927; picture and paragraph in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927

Note: Returning from work on Garden Island; usually took the ferry to Circular Quay and then the tram to Rose Bay, but on the day of the accident he took the ferry to Watsons Bay; possessed life assurance with AMP for £150

Injuries: Cut on nose, abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Probate NSW 149107

Claims: His widow Maud sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

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ROBINSON, Florence Edith H., 59

Address: 'Chuntries', The Crescent, Vacluse

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Florence Edith H. May, in Sydney, 1868, to Charles H. May and Mary May, nee Cregg, the eldest of four children; her siblings were Percy W. (1870-1924, married Emily Liggins, 1897), Ernest Flower (1871-1874), and Mabel F. C. (born 1873, married Lewis H. Glasgow, 1891)

Spouse and children: Married Ralph Grinsell Robinson (son of Ralph and Jane Robinson, died 1940) in Sydney, 1899; had children Ralph B. (born Vacluse, 1900) and Darcy Macalister Ralph (1903-1991, married Sheila Lethbridge McDonald, 1939)

Note: One of the first to be rescued from the water on 3 November 1927, she initially survived the accident but died of cardiac failure in St. Luke's Hospital, Darlinghurst, on 20 November 1927

Formal identification: By her husband, Ralph Grinsell Robinson, and the husband of her niece, Rupert John Roston Hurst, an Officer in the A.M.F. Staff Corps, residing at 36 The Crescent, Vacluse, SRNSW 2/10498, pages 120-121

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 November 1927

Funeral: 21 November 1927; buried at South Head Cemetery

Obituary: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927, which includes a list of mourners

Note: Florence was well known in Vacluse at the time for her association with several charities; her husband, Ralph, was Manager of the Scottish Australian Investment Co. Ltd.

Cause of death: Cardiac failure following the effects of immersion

Probate record: Acta NSW 149518

SHARP, Hazel Beatrice ('Betty'), 15

Address: 'Girrawheen', 28 Parsley Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Born: Greenwich, N.S.W., 1912, to Arthur Sylvester R. Sharp (son of William Henry and Eliza Alice Sharp, married 1908, died 1945) and Olive Beatrice Sharp, nee Barrow (1882-1938); sister of Neville Arthur Ramsay (born Greenwich, N.S.W., 14 November 1909; married Cecily Mary Corbett in Sydney, 1942; served in the Australian Army from December 1941 to December 1945, No. N218315). Arthur and Olive divorced ca. 1922 and Olive remarried in Waverley in 1924, to Ralph V. Hodgson (who died in 1933)

Possessions when found: A Girl Guides badge with 'BS' scratched into the reverse side

Formal identification: By J. R. Hammond of 7 Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse, SRNSW 2/10498, page 40

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 November 1927

Funeral: 12 November 1927; buried at South Head Cemetery

Note: Life assurance with AMP for £50

Cause of death: Drowning

STEVENS, Alfred Henry, 57

Address: 'Minisota', 14 Victoria Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Storekeeper in the Royal Australian Navy, based on the R.A.N. Fleet Auxiliary vessel *Kurumba* at Garden Island

Born: Stepney, England, 1870, to Frederick Stevens (born 1846), dock labourer, and Jane E. Stevens (born 1846), the eldest of four children; his siblings were Arthur E. (born 1875), Charles G. (born 1878), and Emma E. (born 1879)

Spouse: Married to Mary Ann Stevens

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Body recovered: 6 November 1927

Possessions when found: £2 14s 5d in cash, a spectacles case, a pocket knife, a matchbox and letters

Formal identification: By a friend, John Alexander McKay, of the same address, SRNSW 2/10498, page 26

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: 7 November 1927, buried at South Head Cemetery, Section N, Row 7, Grave 304

Note: Owned no property, but had just put down a £100 deposit on a house in Granville; his widow Mary Ann moved to Granville after his death

Injuries: Bruise on lip, scattered abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: His widow Mary Ann sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £2,000 damages [see Appendix X]

STILES, Henry Harold, 63

Address: Pacific Street, Laings Point, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Retired Share Registrar with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, but presently an insurance agent for AMP

Born: Kyneton, Victoria, 1864, to Henry Bowen August Stiles, a Bank of N.S.W. Inspector, and Harriett Stiles, nee Driberg or Betts [conflicting data located] (married 1859), the third of seven children; siblings were John Tarlton (born 1860), Jane Margaret (born 1862), Mary Stuart (1866-1877), Charles Leonard (1868-1870), Arthur Lauriston (born 1870), and Gordon (born 1872); grandson of the Reverend Henry Tarlton Stiles, one of the first Church of England clerics in Australia, who was minister at Windsor from 1833 until his death in 1867

Spouse and child: Married Amy Chandler in Emmaville, N.S.W., 1899; had one (unidentified) daughter

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A silver watch, two pairs of gold spectacles, a ferry ticket, keys, a matchbox, a notebook, insurance papers from AMP, other papers and letters, a magnifying glass, a tobacco pouch, three pencils, a tie pin, sleeve bands, a Bank of N.S.W. deposit slip showing a deposit of £15, £6 in notes, £2 in coins, and a handkerchief

Formal identification: By a friend, Cecil Shepherd Smith, an Architect residing at the Grosvenor Hotel, Church Hill, Sydney City, SRNSW 2/10498, page 25

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927

Funeral: Held at St. James' Church, King Street, Sydney, on 7 November 1927, conducted by his cousin, Reverend Arthur Garnsey of St. Paul's College, then buried in South Head Cemetery

Obituary: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 November 1927

Newspaper report: Paragraph printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 6 November 1927

Note: Educated at both Brisbane and Sydney Grammar Schools; owned shares to the value of £3000 and a piece of land valued at £100; possessed no life assurance

Injuries: Abrasions below right knee

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Probate NSW 148506

Claims: His widow Amy sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

Note: His widow Amy moved to Black Street, Vaucluse, after his death

☞ Greycliffe's Passengers - The Victims ☞

TERRY, Mary Jane, 68

Address: 'Pendeen', 195 Victoria Street, Ballarat, Victoria

Occupation: Widow, housewife

Born: Mary Jane Williams in Cornwall, England, ca. 1859, sister of Christopher

Spouse and children: Married Robert Terry (born 1857 to Robert and Elizabeth Terry, nee Mills, died 1903), a miner, in Victoria, 1881; had children William, Florrie, Robert Christopher (hairdresser of Victoria Street, Ballarat, Vic., in 1928), Spencer William (born 1891), Archibald Stanley (1895-1895), Christopher Gordon (born 1896), and Albert Ernest (born 1899)

Possessions when found: £6, a purse, three rings, two gold earrings, and a string of beads; handed over to brother Christopher Williams on 6 November 1927

Formal identification: By a friend, Harold Goldthorp, of 842 Old South Head Road, Rose Bay, SRNSW 2/10498, page 22

Note: Remains entrained to Melbourne on Friday evening, 4 November, for further passage to Ballarat and burial in the Methodist Cemetery

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Note: Staying with her brother, Christopher, and sister-in-law, Martha M. Williams [see below] of 25 Onslow Street, Rose Bay

Injuries: Cut to forehead, fractured nose, abrasions

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: Her son Robert sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

THOMPSON, Henry Thomas, 50

Address: 757 Old South Head Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Ex Navy Officer, employed at Garden Island Torpedo Workshop

Born: Chatham, England

Spouse and child: Married Elsie Agnes Watts (1886-1943) in Paddington, N.S.W., 1917 (divorced 1923); father of Florence Patricia Thompson

Possessions when found: A metal watch, a Masonic badge and a leather case with ferry tickets

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, William Watts, shopkeeper, of 4 Mount Street, Coogee, SRNSW 2/10498, page 32

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Held on Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by Reverend W. E. Maltby, then buried in the Church of England section of South Head Cemetery; Section N, Row 7, Grave 291

Newspaper report: Report on the funeral in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927

Note: Member of the N.S.W. Masonic Club, Masonic Lodge Southern Cross, No. 91

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149192

Claims: His daughter Florence, as Executrix of his estate, sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

TREADGOLD, James Powell, JP, 81

Address: 'Huntcliffe', The Crescent, Vacluse

Occupation: Retired accountant, Leichhardt Councillor, 1892-1913, and six-times Leichhardt Mayor, widower

Born: Stockton, Yorkshire, England, 1847, to Thomas (1804-1854) and Jane Treadgold, nee Powell, one of six children³

Spouse and children: Married Eliza Dodds (1849-1923) in Stockton, Yorkshire, 1869; father of Ellen (born 1870, married name Davis), Lizzie (born 1871), Edith (born 1873, married Charles G. Kenny in Leichhardt, 1891), Minnie Eliza (1875-1952; married Captain William Troup in Waverley, 1903; lived in Russell Street, Watsons Bay, 1927), Florence (born 1877, married William H. Castleman, JP, in Sydney, 1906), and Annie (married William Fenwick in Parramatta, 1907)

Note: The family migrated to Australia aboard White Star Line's masted steamship *Belgic* in 1885. They departed Plymouth, Cornwall, on 19 June 1885, and arrived in Sydney on 12 September 1885, the voyage taking 85 days

Possessions when found: 18 keys on a key ring, a season ticket from Watsons Bay, a gold watch on a chain, a memorandum book, a pocket knife, and £3 in notes

Formal identification: By his grandson, William Treadgold Kenny, a Sales Manager of 14 Stuart Street, Longueville, SRNSW 2/10498, page 9

Death and funeral notices: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

Funeral: Held at St. Peter's Church, Watsons Bay, on Saturday, 5 November 1927, conducted by the Reverends J. F. Cherry and H. C. Foreman, then buried with his wife in the Church of England section of South Head Cemetery

☞ Greycliffe's Passengers - The Victims ☞

Newspaper reports: Picture and summary of his life in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; picture in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927; lists of mourners printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927; picture in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927

Note: Attended boarding school in Kirkleatham, near Redcar, Yorkshire, where a life-long love of cricket began; played in many towns in Northern England, including games against the All-England team, captained by veteran George Parr. He also played against the first Australian team to visit England in 1868⁴

Note: Co-Director and founder of the Leichhardt, Petersham, and Annandale Starr-Bowkett Society; became a member of Masonic Lodge St. John, Leichhardt, in 1900, and transferred to Masonic Lodge Greycliffe, No. 559, in Vaucluse, in 1925

Injuries: Fractured ankle, cut on forehead

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149332

WILLIAMS, Martha Mercia ('Bessie'), 54

Address: 25 Onslow Street, Rose Bay

Occupation: Housewife

Born: Adelaide, South Australia, ca. 1874 (maiden name unknown)

Spouse and children: Married to Christopher Williams, newsagent; mother of Christopher Williams, warehouse employee; sister-in-law of Mary Jane Terry [see above]

Note: Rescued alive and admitted semi-conscious to Sydney Hospital at 5.30 p.m. on 3 November 1927, suffering seriously from shock and the effects of immersion; given a treatment of stimulants, hot blankets and oxygen; her condition deteriorated until she died at 10.00 p.m. that same evening

Formal identification: By a friend, Harold Goldthorp, of 842 Old South Head Road, Rose Bay, SRNSW 2/10498, pages 11 & 22

Funeral: 5 November 1927, buried in Randwick General Cemetery

Note: Owned her house in Onslow Street, which was valued at £1400

Cause of death: Shock from immersion combined with pulmonary oedema

Probate record: Administration NSW 149615

Claims: Her widower Christopher sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

WOLFF, Eugen, 59

Address: 5 Fitzwilliam Road, Vaucluse; otherwise Villa Wolff 12, Stülpmunde, Germany

Occupation: Retired, living on independent means

Born: Stülpmunde, Germany; had only been in Australia a few months

Spouse and child: Husband of Louise Vera Wolff, nee Borchardt, of Darling Point (daughter of Mr and Mrs Nathan Borchardt); father of Herbert Eugen (born 1914)

Body recovered: The last body to be recovered, he was located inside the wreck on 25 November 1927, some three weeks after the accident

Possessions when found: One solitaire emerald and platinum ring, one ring with an emerald and diamond surrounded by smaller emeralds and diamonds, a platinum pendant set with a diamond, a dress pin with pearls, two pearl dress studs, a pair of ruby cufflinks, a pair of gold cufflinks, a gold watch and chain with gold pencil attached, a cigarette case, two studs, a notebook and papers

Formal identification: By his brother-in-law, Fred Stallman, a merchant of 'Yarranabie', Darling Point Road, Darling Point, SRNSW 2/10498, page 59

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Death and funeral notices: Sydney Morning Herald, 26 November 1927

Funeral: 26 November 1927, cremated at Rookwood Cemetery, then ashes buried at South Head Cemetery

Newspaper report: Paragraph in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1927

Note: His wife and son realised he was missing when he failed to appear at the railway station to pick them up from a trip to the Blue Mountains

Cause of death: Drowning

Claims: His widow Louise sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for damages of £10,000 and £2,000 respectively [see Appendix X]

WRIGHT, Reginald Cecil John, 38

Address: 'Booroola', Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Teacher, Science Master at Sydney Boys' High School, earning £527 per annum

Born: Goulburn, N.S.W., 1889, to John William Wright, coach builder, and Sarah Ann Wright, nee Ayliffe (married 1881), of 189 Cowper Street, Goulburn, N.S.W., the sixth of nine children; his siblings were Clarissa Mary (1881-1884), Ethel Harriet (born 1882, married Edward W. Lambert, 1901), Harford George (born 1884, married Annie A. McFadzen, 1910, enlisted 26 January 1917 and served as Private, No. 4440, in the 1st Pioneer Battalion AIF, and returned to Australia 12 June 1919), Arthur S. (born 1886, married Laura E. Weatherstone, 1912), Ruby O. (born 1888, married Daniel W. Thompson, 1915), Lilian B. (1891-1893), Ida M. (born 1893, married Edward H. Sampson, 1915), and Leslie T. (born 1900)

Spouse and children: Married Jessie Alice Kercher in 1913 (born Goulburn, 1889, to Arthur and Grace Kercher); had children Marjorie Joan (born 1917) and John 'Jack' Reginald (born in Sydney, 6 October 1926; served with the R.A.A.F. as a Leading Aircraftman, No. 166215, from October 1944 to August 1946)

Body recovered: 4 November 1927

Possessions when found: A N.S.W. Government Savings Bank book, a watch on a chain, keys, papers, a fountain pen and £7 6s ½d in cash

Formal identification: By his father, John W. Wright, SRNSW 2/10498, page 29

Death and funeral notices: Sydney Morning Herald, 5 November 1927

Funeral: 5 November 1927, then buried in the Church of England section of Rookwood Cemetery, Section 9, Grave 1454

Newspaper reports: Picture in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927; reports on the funeral and lists of mourners in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 7 November 1927; picture and paragraph in the *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927

Note: A popular teacher at Sydney Boys' High School, where he taught eleven years and was nicknamed 'Jasper' by the students; Sydney Boys' High was closed at noon on the day after the accident out of respect, and an annexe in the school library was later opened as a tribute; a three-page article on him appeared in 'The Record', the annual school magazine of Sydney Boys' High School, Vol. XIX, No. 2, December 1927

Note: Life assurance with AMP for £200

Cause of death: Drowning

Probate record: Administration NSW 149120

Claims: His widow Jessie sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £7,500 damages [see Appendix X]

Appendix II

☞ Greycliffe's Passengers – The Survivors ☞

Note: Addresses refer to those given in 1927-28

ARIA, Marie Thelma, 14

Address: 8 Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Born: 1913 to Charles Da Costa Aria (died 1932), letter sorter, and Eleanor Lace Aria, nee Martin (1876-1945; married 1901), the youngest of five children; siblings were Athol Charles Douglas (born Balmain, N.S.W., 21 November 1902; served in the Australian Army during World War II, No. NX96703), Aubrey Jack (born Balmain, N.S.W., 7 May 1904; served in the Australian Army during World War II, No. NX95860), Roma (born 1910), and Frank Mervyn Clive (born 5 May 1910; married Marjorie Florence Smith, 1941; served in the R.A.A.F. in World War II, No. O21935, discharged May 1960 as Squadron Leader; died 1986)

Injuries: Delivered to hospital in a critical condition

Note: Marie died 19 May 1990

BARKER, Purdie, 36

Address: Pilgrim Avenue, Strathfield

Occupation: Gas inspector

BARROWCLIFF, James Blackburn, 16

Address: 'Rivelin', 16 Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolboy

Born: London, England, 22 July 1911, to Charles Bayes Barrowcliff (died 1944), an advertiser, and Eveline Hinton Barrowcliff; siblings were Mavis Louise (married Lindsay Vaughan Carter, 1942), and Richard Hinton (born Murrumbena, Victoria, 13 October 1916; married Olive Lois Loneon, 1943; served in the R.A.A.F. during World War II, No. 422101)

Injuries: Treated in Sydney Hospital for minor injuries to his thigh

Note: Served as a Corporal in the 2nd Australian Fortress Signals Section from July 1943 to October 1944, Nos. NX193317 and N173305; married Vera Florence Cooper in North Sydney, 1944

Claims: His father Charles sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on his behalf in 1928 for £500 damages [see Appendix X]

BERLINER, Kenneth Louis, 14

Address: 162 Hopetoun Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Sydney Boys' High School pupil; graduated 1931

Born: North Carlton, Victoria, 2 September 1913, to Samuel Leon Berliner and Ada Violet Berliner, nee Simmons (married 1909), the second of two children; brother of Leon Joshua Samuel (born North Carlton, Vic., 1912)

Spouse: Married Olga Emily Dutton in Sydney, 1939, became an automobile salesman; died 15 April 1996

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Note: Friends with Ken Horler, Leslie Brook and Leonard Lankshear, who always sat together in the ferry's stern

Bravery Award: Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1928 for helping rescue fellow passengers

Note: Served with the Australian Army from August 1941 to April 1946, in the 7th Australian Division Signals, No. NX76303; whilst a Captain and Adjutant of Divisional Headquarters Army Signals on Balikpapan in June 1945, coincidentally met Ken Horler, by then a Squadron Leader in the R.A.A.F. Although both survived the war, they never saw each other again¹

BITHELL, James Scott

Address: 'Culgoa', Cambridge Avenue, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Senior Assistant Master Attendant at Garden Island

Spouse and child: Married Elizabeth F. Lawson in Paddington, 1909; had son Richard Scott (born 22 July 1917; served in the Australian Army during World War II, No. NX172052)

Note: Boarded *Greycliffe* at Garden Island

Newspaper report: Statement printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927, in which he was one of the first to claim that *Greycliffe* had turned into the path of *Tahiti*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 28 November 1927

BROOK, Leslie Francis, 15

Address: 'Wenorah', 19 Robertson Place, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Sydney Technical High School pupil

Born: Forbes, N.S.W., 1912, to Francis Harold Brook, fisherman, and Ada Brook

Spouse: Married Betty Adams in Woollahra, 1938, later moved to the N.S.W. South Coast

Rescue: Helped save Doris Garrett and Nancy Lewis; taken aboard the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* and landed at Watsons Bay

Note: Close friend of Ken Horler

Injuries: Suffered from 'mental shock' after the accident and missed a lengthy period of school

Newspaper reports: Told his story in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927; picture and paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; mentioned in the *North West Champion* in Moree, 7 November 1927

Claim: His father Francis sued the Union Steamship Company on his behalf in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

CAMPBELL, Jack, 18

Address: 10 Northcote Street, Rose Bay

Injuries: Treated in Sydney Hospital for immersion and cuts to the head and arms

CARR, John, 13

Address: 'Apslawn', 29 Cove Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Sydney Boys' High School pupil; graduated 1931

Born: Brunswick, Victoria, 9 April 1914, to George Austin Carr, a salesman, and Maggie Irene Carr

Spouse and children: Married Muriel (maiden name unknown); had a daughter, Letitia, and a son, Peter

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Injuries: Initially knocked unconscious in the accident; received head injuries; discharged from hospital on 5 November 1927

Note: Served as a Bombardier in the 53rd Anti Aircraft Regiment from April 1943 to August 1946, No. NX200550

Note: Became an accountant; also a keen yachtsman and golfer; died in Sydney 25 May 1998; obituary in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 June 1998

CARRUTHERS, James ('Jim') Edward, 13

Address: 'Waleroi', 79 Wentworth Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Sydney Grammar School pupil

Born: Canterbury, Victoria, 31 October 1914, to Kenneth Norman Carruthers (1886-1943) and Elizabeth Purves Carruthers, nee Small (born 1887, married 1911)

Spouse: Married Margaret Marita Macarthur in Woollahra, 1939

Rescue: His mother was travelling in the opposite direction on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra* and saw him in the water; passengers dived in to save him

Injuries: Delivered to Sydney Hospital unconscious, treated for immersion

Note: Served as a Lance Corporal with the Australian Army's 2/9th Armoured Regiment from January 1942 to January 1944, No. NX84419

CORBY, John Christian, 31

Address: Biniguy Railway Siding Township, 36km east of Moree

Occupation: Railway fettler

Born: N.S.W., 1896, to Christopher Emanuel Corby (1865-1936) and Annie Corby, nee Lynch (ca. 1870-1932, married 1891), the fourth of five children; his siblings were Cecelia E. (born 1892), Emmet Arthur (born 1892; enlisted in the 15th Battalion AIF, 25 March 1915; served as Sergeant, No. 1931, and discharged 21 April 1918; married Kathleen Saunders, 1929), Dudley James (born 1893; enlisted in the 2nd Battalion AIF, 15 March 1916; served as Private, No. 376B, and discharged 20 November 1918; married Agnes Thompson, 1922), and Amy M. (1906-1906)

Spouse and child: Married Mary McNamara in 1920 and had daughter Noreen in 1926; both died in the accident [see Appendix I]

Note: Sitting on Greycliffe's top deck with his wife and daughter; the family had only been in Sydney for two days of a week's holiday and were staying in Hotel Burlington, Corner of Hay and Sussex Streets, Haymarket; had intended to take holidays to Sydney in August 1927, but they were postponed until November

Rescue: Picked up by the ferry S.S. *Kummulla* and landed at Circular Quay

Newspaper reports: Several statements about him and his family are printed in all the Sydney newspapers in the first days following the accident; told his story to the *North West Champion* in Moree, 10 November 1927; see also the same newspaper on 7 November 1927; wrote a letter of thanks to the Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which was printed 17 November 1927

Note: John enlisted in the 3rd Division AIF Train, 31 January 1916; served as Private, No. 730, and discharged 11 May 1919

Hearing: Statement of evidence given at the Coronial Inquest on 15 November 1927, SRNSW 2/10498, page 17

Claim: Sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]

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CORNFORD, Arthur Ernest

Occupation: Petty Officer, R.A.N., based on H.M.A.S. *Australia*

Note: Boarded *Greycliffe* at Garden Island; after boarding, he had a premonition of the accident

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court on 23 October 1929, in which he stated he saw no change of course by either vessel

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £75 damages [see Appendix X]

DAHLEN, Erik August

Address: 53 Wentworth Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Managing Director of the Baltic Separator Company

Born: Unknown, possibly Germany, to Augustus Nikolaus and Hilda Amelia Dahlen

Spouse: Married Muriel Hope Curtis (daughter of Alfred R. and Mary Ann Curtis) in 1923; Erik died in 1936 and Muriel in 1941

Rescue: Reading the newspaper in the stern of the ferry and witnessed the impact; rescued from the harbour and landed at the Man'o'War Steps; originally reported as missing, he had to telephone the police and ask them to correct his status

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, and at the Coronial Inquest, 16 January 1928, in which he testified about the time the accident occurred, as his watch stopped at 4.29 p.m.; also testified in regard to the circumstances leading up to and following the impact of the two vessels; appeared before the Admiralty Court, 22 October 1929, during which he sketched the course of events; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 248-253

EWING, Ronald Henry, 15

Address: 'St. Bees', 30 Russell Street, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolboy

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 8 August 1912, to John Jessiman Ewing, a mariner, and Alice May Ewing (Alice died 1931); possible brother Ian

Rescue: Reportedly saved a woman's life

Injuries: Treated in Sydney Hospital for cuts to head and abrasions

Note: Served as a Corporal in the Australian Army's 2/8 Field Regiment from July 1940 to November 1945, No. NX56879, died 18 June 1996

FAIRWEATHER, Hubert T., 15

Address: 2 Jesmond Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolboy from Sydney Boys' High School

Born: England, 1912, to Isabel Annie Fairweather

FLANNERY, James

Address: Victoria Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Seaman

Rescue: Spent fifteen minutes in the water next to the body of a dead woman; rescued by the crew of *Captain Cook*

Injury: Arm injured

Newspaper report: Told his story in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927

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GARRETT, Doris May, 14

Address: 'Marion', 1 Cambridge Avenue, Vaucluse

Occupation: Sydney Girls' High School pupil

Born: Fulham, Middlesex, England, 1913, to Charles and Mabel Victoria Garrett, nee Bayliss (married 1912)

Spouse: Married Derrick John Pitcher in Petersham, 1942; died 12 February 1988

Note: An attractive girl who had recently moved with her parents from England; good friends with Ken Horler, Lennie Lankshear, Leslie Brook and Ken Berliner²; her father was also aboard *Greycliffe*, but did not survive [see Appendix I]

Rescue: Helped to safety by Leslie Brook, who found her struggling in the water and passed her a piece of wood to help keep her afloat; rescued from the water by the crew of the tug *Bimbi*

Note: Wrote a letter to friends a few days after the tragedy in which she explained her feelings and her version of events. Part of this letter has been reproduced in Chapter IV

Newspaper report: Her rescue by Leslie Brook is mentioned in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927

Note: After the loss of her father, she dropped out of her group of friends; she and her mother withdrew from public life, would not come to the door of their home, and were seldom seen in public³

Claims: Her mother Mabel sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on her behalf in 1928 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

GOOD, Con

Address: Austral Park, N.S.W.

Occupation: Naval Rating

HANLEY, Eric Raymond, 12

Address: 21 Cambridge Avenue, Vaucluse

Occupation: Schoolboy

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 6 October 1915, to James R. Hanley and Olive M. Hanley, nee Case (married 1915); older brother of Norma Kathleen (1917-1992)

Bravery Award: Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1929 for assisting *Greycliffe's* engineer, Jack Barrett

Newspaper report: Award mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 October 1929, page 16

Note: Served as a Flight Lieutenant with the R.A.A.F. (79 Spitfire Squadron) from September 1940 to February 1946, No. 402503; died 22 February 1992

HARDY, Arthur

Note: Reported missing after the accident as an attaché case containing his papers was found floating amongst the wreckage; reported to the Water Police on 26 November 1927 and confirmed he was not aboard, but had left his bag behind on the ferry

HILL, Dora, 13

Address: 'Wallasey', 154 Hopetoun Avenue, Vaucluse

Occupation: Sydney Girls' High School pupil

Born: Lancashire, England, 1914, to Samuel Hill, plumber, and Emma Hill; older sister of Agnes (born Lancashire, 1915), who was also aboard *Greycliffe*, but did not survive [see Appendix I]

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Note: Married Alfred Sydney Dean (1909-1986) in Chatswood in 1944

Claims: Her father Samuel sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on her behalf in 1929 for £250 damages [see Appendix X]

HILLIARD, George Franklin, 31

Address: Salisbury Street, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Salesman and 'commercial traveller' for Henry Berry and Co.; ex-Mariner who had spent 8½ years at sea after the Great War, and had obtained a First Mate's Certificate of Competency in steam

Born: 1896; died 29 January 1988

Spouse: Married May F. Lock in Sydney, 1923

Note: Enlisted in the Army on 21 September 1915; served as Sergeant, No. 3241, in the 55th Battalion AIF; discharged on 10 December 1918

Note: Saw *Tahiti* approaching but did not pay much attention to her; was not aware of the danger until it was too late, and followed all the other passengers rushing to the starboard side of the ferry; his next memory was coming to the surface of the water

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, and later also at the Coronial Inquest

HORLER, Kenneth Moore, 14

Address: Cambridge Avenue, Vaucluse

Occupation: Sydney Technical High School pupil

Born: 2 January 1913 to Edmund Horler (died 1940), JP, Town Clerk of Vaucluse, and Alberta Jessie Horler, nee Hogue (married 1907); younger brother of Clarence Edmund (1909-1998, married Ethel Mexeldis St. Ledger, 1935)

Spouse and children: Married Vivienne Brettelle on 27 June 1936; had sons Ken, today a QC and Acting Judge, and Anthony, a television producer; granddaughter Sacha Horler is today a double AFI Award-winning actress

Career: Qualified as a chartered accountant in 1936 at age 23; established his own chartered accountancy practice after World War II; since retirement has been actively involved in the Ranfurly Library Service, a book-aid charity engaged in the world campaign against illiteracy, of which he is Chairman; awarded the OAM in 1997 for his charity work with Ranfurly

Note: Served six years with the R.A.A.F. during World War II; demobilised 13 December 1945 with the rank of Squadron Leader, No. 261690

Note: Though they had personally witnessed the accident from the stern of the ferry, Ken and his friends were surprised they were never called to give evidence at any of the enquiries⁴; Ken maintains to this day that *Greycliffe* was way off her usual course

HORLEY, Adelaide ('Addie')

Address: 95 Carrington Road, Waverley

INGLIS, Alexander, 22

Address: 'Strath Isla', Coolong Road, Vaucluse

Occupation: Medical Student

Born: Balmain, N.S.W., 21 May 1904, to John and Agnes Inglis, nee Gorman (married 1903); brother of Phyllis

Injuries: Head injuries

Greycliffe survivor, Ken Horler, in a photograph taken at his 80th birthday. As a 14-year-old lad in 1927, he was sitting in the rear of *Greycliffe* with his school mates when the collision occurred. Surprised he was never called to testify, he maintains to this day that *Greycliffe* was way off course.

© Ken Horler

Greycliffe survivors Claude and Mary 'Molly' Jones at their wedding at St. Joseph's, Newtown, a few months prior to the accident. On 3 November 1927, Molly was approximately eight weeks pregnant with their first child.

© Judy Calder

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Note: Served in the Australian Army's 7th Field Ambulance from September 1941 to May 1943; discharged as a Major, No. Q56576

JONES, Benjamin George, 43

Address: 29 Holt Avenue, Mosman

Occupation: Commercial Traveller

Injuries: Fractured skull, eye injury, immersion

Claim: Sued the Union Steamship Company in 1928 for £1,500 damages [see Appendix X]

JONES, Claude, 31

Address: 2 Wellesley Street, Summer Hill

Occupation: Boot maker

Born: Parramatta, N.S.W., 17 July 1895, to William Charles and Annie May Jones, nee Conroy, the fourth of six children

Spouse: Married Mary ('Molly') Jones [see below] at St. Joseph's Church, Newtown, on 18 June 1927

Injuries: Immersion; discharged from Sydney Hospital on 10 November 1927

Newspaper report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £500 damages [see Appendix X]

Note: Died in 1970 and buried at Rookwood Cemetery

JONES, Mary Evelyn ('Molly'), 31

Address: 2 Wellesley Street, Summer Hill

Occupation: Hat trimmer at Brendan Bros.

Born: Baptised Mary Evelyn McEvoy at St. Benedict's Church, Newtown, 17 September 1895, to Michael Patrick and Emily Elizabeth McEvoy, nee Innes, the youngest of five children

Spouse: Married Claude Jones [see above] at St. Joseph's Church, Newtown, on 18 June 1927

Injuries: Discharged from Sydney Hospital on 10 November 1927; was approximately eight weeks pregnant with her first child at the time of the accident

Newspaper report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £300 damages [see Appendix X]

Note: Later had children Mary Sheila (1928-1997), John Christopher (1930-1990), Patricia Anne (1932-1978), Joseph Claude (1933-1994), and Maureen Bernadette (born 1934); died 8 August 1987 and buried in her parents' plot at Rookwood Cemetery

JONES, Phyllis, 14

Address: Hornby Lighthouse, South Head

Injuries: Immersion, bruising, good condition

KEANE, Harold Vivian, 35

Address: 'Hawthorne', Vacluse Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Draftsman

Born: Bathurst, N.S.W., 1892, to George A. (1864-1920) and Jessie Keane, nee Hartley (ca.1867-1929; emigrated to Australia with her parents and sisters aboard the ship *La*

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Hogue, arriving in Sydney 16 September 1879; married 1888), the second of three children; siblings were Norman G. D. (born 1889), and Lois Thelma (1898-1994)
Spouse: Married Marjorie H. Luhr in Burwood, 1928
Note: Enlisted in the Army, 8 October 1916, and served as Private, No. 63759, with Artillery Details of the AIF; discharged 4 June 1919
Rescue: One of the last to be picked up after the accident, spent almost an hour in the water
Newspaper report: Statements about his experience in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927

KING, Matthew, 48

Address: Northcote Street, Rose Bay

LAWSON, Alexander Keith, 15

Address: 'Sakura', Cambridge Avenue, Vaucluse
Born: Potts Point, N.S.W., on 29 November 1911, to Alexander Morris Lawson, clerk, and Williamina Lawson
Spouse: Married Gwendolyn Lesley Stillwell in Sydney, 1940
Rescue: Was sitting in the stern of the ferry when a large piece of timber fell from the upper deck, which struck him on the side of the head and stunned him. Thrown into the water, he was brought back to reality and grasped a lifebuoy; subsequently helped a man and a woman by giving them debris to stay afloat
Newspaper reports: The story of his experiences was printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927, and a large picture of him appears on page 17 of the same edition
Note: Served as a Signaller in the Australian Army (1 Australian Air Fmn Signals) from August 1943 to January 1946, Nos. NX173123 and N318254

LEE-BROWN, Ada Mary

Address: 'Greystanes', Fitzwilliam Road, Vaucluse
Born: Date unknown, maiden name Kingsbury
Spouse: Married Dr. Robert Lee-Brown
Note: Sitting on the upper deck, near the port cabin door; was not aware her husband was also on board; she survived, he did not [see Appendix I]
Rescue: Dragged unconscious onto a raft by Gene Wise and Letty Stewart, then all three were picked up by tug *Bonny Bell*; later presented Letty Stewart with a watch in appreciation for her rescue
Newspaper reports: Statement printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1928
Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £5,000 damages [see Appendix X]
Note: Remarried in Newtown in 1939 to Arthur Earl Stutchbury, an auctioneer

LEWIS, Nancy, 13

Address: 9 Olola Avenue, Vaucluse
Occupation: Sydney Girls' High School pupil
Born: Annandale, N.S.W., 1914, to Archer Lewis and Martha Mary Lewis, nee Abbott (married Annandale, 1908); brother Archer jnr. (born and died Marrickville, 1909); owners of the New England Hotel in Walcha, N.S.W., in 1927

☞ *Greycliffe's Passengers - The Survivors* ☞

Note: Sent to Sydney to stay with relatives in order to go to school; an attractive, brown-skinned girl, whom all the local boys were madly in love with⁵

Rescue: Saved by Leslie Brook, who found her struggling in the water; picked up by the crew of the tug *Bimbi*

Note: Close friends of Ken Berliner, Ken Horler and Leslie Brook, with whom she swam, sailed and danced for years, after which they lost contact⁶

MATTHEWS, Henry John, 45

Address: 58 Lucas Street, Camperdown

Occupation: Railway Labourer

Born: Sydney, 1880, to Henry John and Eva Ann Matthews

Spouse and child: Married Selina M. Sharpe in Dubbo, 1901; had son Henry John (born Parkes, 1902)

MOYLAN, Ruth Mary, 16

Address: 'The Briars', Wentworth Road, Vacluse

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1911 to James Hilary and Maude Ellen Moylan (married 1909) the second of four children; siblings were Norah B. (born 1910), Hilary Patrick (born 16 November 1912; married Louise Jessie [maiden name?]); served in the R.A.A.F. during World War II, killed in action over Germany, 14 September 1944) and Noel (born in Vacluse, 19 December 1915; served during in the R.A.A.F. from 1940-1941 and in the Australian Army, 1941-1946)

Spouse: Married Kenneth Spofforth Brodie (born Mosman, N.S.W., 15 October 1915; served in the Australian Army during World War II, discharged October 1945 as a Lieutenant, No. NX147862) in Sydney, 1943; Ruth died 25 April 1987

Injuries: Broken collar bone, good condition; released from hospital on 5 November 1927

Newspaper report: Mentioned in the *North West Champion*, Moree, 7 November 1927, as she was a cousin of Mrs Ewan Cameron of Moree

MUIR, George McKinnon

Occupation: Third Officer of the R.A.N. fleet auxiliary vessel *Kurumba*

Note: Joined *Greycliffe* at Circular Quay but alighted at Garden Island; transferred to the naval workboat *Sapphire* to return to his ship; was part way to *Kurumba* when he saw *Greycliffe* sinking; the vessel was turned and headed for the accident to help in the rescue

O'BRIEN, Sheila, 14

Address: 164 Hopetoun Avenue, Vacluse

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1913, to William H. and Jessie O'Brien, nee McMahon (married 1910)

Note: A popular girl, who later married the local Chemist and moved to Double Bay⁷

Claims: Her mother Jessie sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on her behalf in 1928 for £500 damages [see Appendix X]

PFEIFFER, John ('Jack') Edward, 15

Address: 'Sunny Brae', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Sydney Grammar School pupil

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1912, to Heinrich ('Henry') Pfeiffer and Lily Pfeiffer, nee Cooke (married 1910); younger brother of Harry Edmund (28 January 1911-1999; married Yvonne Mavis Adele Walker, 1936; served in the Australian Army during World War II as a Warrant Officer 2nd Class, No. N16144)

Spouse: Married Patricia Elizabeth Mabel Goodson (1914-1991) in Woollahra, 1941

Note: Was aboard *Greycliffe* with friend Jim Carruthers; struck and stunned by fragments falling from the air

Note: Interviewed by Peter Luck for his television series and book *This Fabulous Century*

REES, Alice Maud

Address: 251 Nelson Street, Annandale

Spouse: Married to John Rees, motor driver

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

SANDERS, Thelma, 14

Address: Davies Avenue, Vacluse

Born: 1913 to George Sanders, bricklayer, and Margaret Rene Sanders

Note: An attractive girl and a strong swimmer⁸

SCOTT, Leila Vivian

Address: 15 Latimer Road, Waverley

Occupation: Private nurse for a child at Point Piper; on her afternoon off

Born: Daughter of Mr & Mrs H. W. Scott, of Gerringong, N.S.W.

Spouse and children: Later married Harry Wilford of 'Riverview', Milton, N.S.W., had children Dawn, Shirley, George and Herbert, and at least seven grandchildren

Note: Probably survived the accident because she moved to an outside seat from her original choice of one inside

Injuries: Treated for cuts, bruises and shock

Note: Lost her engagement ring and a gold watch in the accident

Newspaper report: Her story was told in the *Milton Times*, 21 March 1958

SMITH, James, 42

Address: 'Westbury', 44 Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Labourer

Spouse: Married to Daisy Marion Smith

Injuries: Immersion; released from Sydney Hospital on 5 November 1927

STEEL, Joyce A., 12

Address: 'Garryowen', 65 Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Schoolgirl

Born: Drummoyne, N.S.W., 1916, to Frederick Orpen Steel, sharebroker, and Emily Elizabeth Steel, nee Clark (married 1905)

Injuries: Fractured left leg, good condition; one of the first to be admitted to Sydney Hospital and one of the first to be released; released from hospital on 5 November 1927

☛ *Greycliffe's Passengers - The Survivors* ☛

STEWART, Letty Laird, 11

Address: 'Strathern', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Student of the Kambala School, Rose Bay

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1916, to Harold Mark Stewart, merchant, and Rebecca Stewart [see below]

Spouse: Married Robert Evan Henry (26 April 1914-1995; served in the Australian Army during World War II as a Lieutenant, NX68769) in 1940; Letty died 22 December 2000

Note: Had been off school for a few days with the flu, but had gone into the city with her mother to go shopping and was returning with *Greycliffe*

Rescue: Taken aboard the tug *Bonny Bell* then transferred to *Captain Cook*, which brought her ashore at Watsons Bay

Note: Helped rescue an unconscious Ada Lee-Brown with her friend Gene Wise, and was later given a watch by Lee-Brown in appreciation

Bravery Award: Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. at Sydney Town Hall in September 1928 for helping rescue Ada Lee-Brown; fell down the Town Hall steps after the ceremony

Newspaper reports: Nicknamed 'the girl in green' by the newspapers for the dress she was wearing at the time of the accident and noted for her heroism in assisting others; told her story in the *Pocket Book Weekly*, 4 February 1950

Claims: Her father Harold sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on her behalf in 1928 for £750 damages [see Appendix X]

STEWART, Rebecca

Address: 'Strathern', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Spouse and child: Married to Harold Mark Stewart, merchant, and mother of Letty Stewart [see above]

Injuries: Serious condition, remained unconscious for 3 days

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1928 for £1,000 damages [see Appendix X]

STEWART, Robert, 48

Address: Victoria Street, Watsons Bay

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1929 for £2,000 damages [see Appendix X]

STODDART, Charles Vernon, 27

Address: Cambridge Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Clerk

Born: London, England, 27 July 1900

Spouse: Married Dorothy Stewart Cameron (1901-1989) in Woollahra, 1924

Note: Served as a Private in the 9th Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps from March 1942 to September 1945, No. N323559; died 5 May 1995

Note: Was sitting inside an upper deck cabin and saved himself by scrambling out a window; beckoned two school boys to follow him and all three survived; also helped Leila Scott to safety

Newspaper report: Mentioned in the *Milton Times*, 21 March 1958

SULLY, Dorothy B., 19

Address: 'Murtle', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Nurse at Royal Alexandra Hospital

Born: Waverley, N.S.W., 1908, to Walter Francis Sully and Mabel Gertrude Sully [see below]; siblings were Walter H. B. (born 1896), Stanley Francis (born 1899), Rowland Noel (born 1903), and Anna M. (born 1905)

Spouse: Married Alan Joseph Canny in Woollahra, 1938

Injuries: Treated in Sydney Hospital for shock, cuts and abrasions; released from hospital on 5 November 1927

SULLY, Mabel Gertrude, 50

Address: 'Murtle', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Dancing Teacher

Born: 1877, maiden name Sampson

Spouse and children: Married Walter Francis Sully in Sydney in 1897; mother of Walter H. B. (born 1896), Stanley Francis (born 1899), Rowland Noel (born 1903), Anna M. (born 1905), and Dorothy (born 1908) [see above]

Injuries: Critical injuries

THOMPSON, Florence, 24

Address: Carrara Convalescent Home [now Strickland House], Vacluse Road, Vacluse

Injuries: Treated in Sydney Hospital for shock, immersion and a fractured leg

Newspaper report: Front page picture printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927

TOWNER, Nancy, 19

Address: Adam's Cake Shop, Chapel Road, Bankstown

Born: 1908 to Albert Edward and Emily Towner

Injuries: Bruised spine, fractured leg, shock, fair condition

Newspaper report: Front-page picture printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927, erroneously labelled "Marcia Towner."

Claims: Her father Albert sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries on her behalf in 1928 for £1,500 damages [see Appendix X]

TRESSIDER, David, 5

Address: 'Helston', Eastern Avenue, Kensington

Born: Son of Percy B. Tressider and May Ewen Tressider [see below]

TRESSIDER, May Ewen

Address: 'Helston', Eastern Avenue, Kensington

Spouse: Married to Percy Berliet Tressider, caterer; mother of the above David

Injuries: Discharged from Sydney Hospital on 10 November 1927

Newspaper report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927

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TURNER, S. V., 40

Address: Gould Street, Campsie

Occupation: Packer

Injuries: Injuries not specified

TYREE, Daisy May, 24

Address: 34 Floss Street, Hurlstone Park

Spouse: Married to Cecil Hodgeman Tyree (born Christchurch, New Zealand, 13 February 1904; served as a Leading Aircraftman in the R.A.A.F. during World War II); later divorced

Injuries: Injuries not specified, suffered from nervous shock

Note: Lost money and personal belongings, clothes damaged

Claim: Daisy and her husband both sued the Union Steamship Company separately in 1928 for damages of £2,000 and £1,000 respectively [see Appendix X]

WHALLEY, Stanley C., 32

Address: Watsons Bay

Occupation: Fitter at Cockatoo Island, ex-Royal Navy engineer

Born: Silloth, Cambria, England, on the coast of Solway Firth; had a sister, Violet (a nurse at Ryde, N.S.W. in 1927)

Career: Apprenticed to Vickers at Barrow-on-Furnace, England, at age 16; became Chief Artificer in the Royal Navy at 18; served in World War I aboard several Royal Navy destroyers, and remained with the Navy after the War came to an end; was minesweeping with the Royal Navy in the Baltic Sea in 1920 when involved in an accident; spent 35 weeks in hospital and was invalided out; went back to sea in World War II, but was injured in an explosion in Brisbane and invalided out again; worked ashore for many years, then came to Sydney only 18 months prior to the *Greycliffe* accident to join his parents and sister

Rescue: Could not swim but taken aboard the tug *Bimbi*, then transferred to the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook*, and brought ashore

Newspaper reports: Several statements printed in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, in November 1927; life story in *People* magazine, 25 February 1953

WILLMOTT, Gertrude M., 14

Address: 'Wallaroo', 19 Victoria Street, Vacluse

Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1913, to Edward Percy and Mary Sarah Catherine Willmott, nee Hade (married 1903); siblings were Mary H. (born 1904, married Bertie T. Crook 1928), Julius Edward (born 1905), Douglas Percy (born Sydney, 25 March 1911; served in the R.A.N. during World War II, No. S/6642; married Grace Ada Keetley, 1945) and Betty E. (born 1915)

Spouse: Married John Joseph Moore in Sydney, 1935 (born Lismore, N.S.W., 8 July 1909; served in the 101 Australian General Hospital during World War II; discharged in 1947 as a Lieutenant, No. NX139616)

WISE, Eugene Phyllis Westley, 15

Address: 'The Roo', Wentworth Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: S.C.E.G.S. pupil

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Born: Woollahra, N.S.W., 1911, to Alfred Alexander Westley Wise (died 1945) and Elizabeth Jane Wise, nee Woodward (born 1876, married 1900); siblings were Mabel (1901-1991), Alfred Henry Westley (born 1902, married Rose B. Watt 1928), Stanley William Westley (1905-1996, married Margaret Wilson 1938) and Charles Gordon Westley (born 1908, married Elma Lillian Bowen 1936)

Spouse: Married Hilton William Chalmers in Woollahra, 1936; died 20 October 1993

Note: Was thrown into the water and saw *Tahiti's* propeller coming towards her before resurfacing; helped rescue a small boy (unidentified) and Ada Lee-Brown with her friend Letty Stewart

Bravery Award: Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. at Sydney Town Hall in September 1928 for her rescue efforts

Newspaper report: Some of her story is told in the *Pocket Book Weekly*, 4 February 1950

Appendix III

❧ *Greycliffe's Crew* ❧

Note: Addresses refer to those given in 1927-28

BARNES, William Thomas, Captain, 52

Address: 114 Wardell Road, Dulwich Hill

Occupation: *Greycliffe's* Master on and off for ten years, relieving regular Master George Gerdes on 3 November 1927; regular shifts with *Greycliffe* were Wednesday and Thursday each week

Born: Sydney, 1875, to Thomas and Ellen Barnes, nee Craig (married 1873); siblings were Ernest F. (born 1877, married Jane D. Young 1902), John Henry (born 1879, married Emily Drew 1902), and Ellen (born 1880, married William E. Williams 1901)

Spouse and Children: Married Maud Margaret Thomas in Sydney, 1914; had daughter Irene Isabel (1904-1987)

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and Rivers Steamer Masters Certificate No. 594, issued 11 April 1894

Rescue: Found clinging to a raft and was taken aboard the ferry S.S. *Kurraba*. After recovering, returned to the water in *Burra-Bra's* lifeboat to help rescue others; later transferred to the ferry S.S. *Woollahra* and taken to Circular Quay

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, the Coronial Inquest, 3 February 1928, and Admiralty Court, 22 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 616-646 and 696

BARRETT, Eric John ('Jack'), 40

Address: 'Horncliffe', Cambridge Avenue, Watsons Bay

Occupation: *Greycliffe's* Engineer

Born: Sydney, 1887, to John E. and Margaret A. Barrett, nee Craig (married 1887), the oldest of three children; younger siblings were Janet S. (born 1890, married James A. Brett 1913) and Archibald C. (1893-1894)

Spouse and Children: Married Annie E. O. Armstrong in Sydney in 1912; had children Margaret N. (born 1913), Mary R. (born 1916) and John Frederick (born Vaucluse, 18 July 1918; served with the Australian Army's 2/3 A.I.B. during World War II, No. NX68578)

Rescue: Rescued by a boat from the ferry *Woollahra* and landed at Circular Quay; admitted to Sydney Hospital with a compound leg fracture and crushed chest; uncorroborated information suggests his leg deteriorated until it was eventually amputated

Newspaper Reports: His story is told in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927; a statement about the progress of his recovery appears in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1927; a picture of him on crutches and short paragraph regarding his recovery appears in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 2 January 1928

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, the Coronial Inquest, 10 January 1928, and the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929

Claims: Sued the Union Steamship Company in 1929 for £3,000 damages [see Appendix X]

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DEAN, Alfred Norman, 37

Address: 'Ruhamah', 21 Robertson Place, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Greycliffe's Fireman since she entered service in 1911

Born: Sydney, 1891, to John George (died 1925) and Tryphena Dean, nee Lewis (ca.1852-1932, married 1875), the youngest of eight children; older siblings were Isabella Kate (born 1875), Maude M. (1878-1880), George Andrew (1879-1880), William Henry (born 1881), Gertrude Alice (1882-1882), Leslie V. (1885-1885) and Lionel Arthur (born 1888, married Phyllis McDonald 1913; enlisted in the 18th Battalion AIF, 21 July 1915; served as Private, No. 2359, and discharged on 11 April 1916)

Spouse and Children: Married Estelle Gladys M. Child in Sydney in 1909; had children Daphne I. M. (born 1909), Alfred L. (born 1911) and Doreen Estelle (1917-2001)

Rescue: Helped rescue many survivors before being taken aboard the Water Police launch; injured and treated at Sydney Hospital

Newspaper Reports: Statement in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, the Coronial Inquest, 10 January 1928, and the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 145-155

Claims: Sued both the Union Steamship Company and Sydney Ferries in 1930 for damages of £1,000 [see Appendix X]

GERDES, George Walter, 54

Occupation: Regular Master of Greycliffe, Friday to Tuesday each week

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and Rivers Steamer Masters Certificate No. 665, issued 20 July 1897

Note: Taking his days off and replaced by William Barnes; not aware of the accident until he went to the wharf next day; 'I am a skipper without a ship', he stated ¹

JONES, Frederick Edgar

Address: 'Iris', Rose Street, Punchbowl

Occupation: Greycliffe's Deckhand for around eight years; employed in general duties such as putting out the gangway, tending the ropes, sweeping the deck and collecting tickets; occasionally acted as helmsman

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 23 November 1927 that he estimated Greycliffe was doing around ten knots, whilst Tahiti was doing around fifteen. He had been collecting tickets and turned to see Tahiti bearing down on the ferry; called out to passengers to run for their lives and later helped rescue several people; gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 10 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 131-144

Bravery Award: Silver Medal and Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1928 for helping rescue passengers

Claims: Sued the Union Steamship Company in 1929 for £50 damages [see Appendix X]

Appendix IV

❧ Tahiti's Crew ❧

The data within this appendix is divided into two separate sections. The first section comprises biographical information on the members of *Tahiti's* crew who played a roll in the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* Disaster and ensuing trials. Although not strictly a member of *Tahiti's* crew, I have also included the Harbour Pilot in this list as he was aboard the vessel during the collision. The second section shows a full list of *Tahiti's* 146 crew, extracted from the Union Steamship Company's crew list, dated 7 November 1927.¹

Note: Addresses refer to those given in 1927-28

ALDWELL, Basil Meredith, Captain, 57

Address: 76 Merlin Street, North Sydney [now a part of Neutral Bay]

Occupation: Master of S.S. *Tahiti* during the collision with *Greycliffe*, but had also served as Master in 1919 and from 1922 to 1927; had not had an accident in 22 years at sea in steamships, and 21 years as Master

Born: Sandgate, Kent, England, on 29 August 1870; died January 1933

Certificates of Competency: Master's Certificate for Foreign-Going Ships, No. 425, issued N.S.W., 7 August 1896; Pilotage Exemption Certificate for N.S.W., No. 2737, issued 15 May 1907, then an extension, No. 4108, issued 3 June 1908

Newspaper Reports: Two pictures printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, and Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 72-86

Findings: Criticised for statements he made to Wellington Police upon arrival from Sydney, which he later contradicted under oath in court. Admitting the inconsistency, he explained this was the result of having not slept for 36 hours, due to having remained on the bridge to navigate through thick fog; although not held responsible for the accident, was berated by Justice Halse Rogers in the Admiralty Court for having not warned Pilot Carson about his excessive speed or of the presence and close proximity of *Greycliffe*

Note: Continued to serve as Master of *Tahiti* until mid-1928, then returned to her again in late 1928 and remained with her until 1930

CARSON, Thomas, Captain, 47

Address: 'Somerset', Salisbury Place, Watsons Bay

Occupation: Harbour Pilot with the N.S.W. Department of Navigation; Pilot assigned to the harbour removal of S.S. *Tahiti* on the afternoon of 3 November 1927; had been a Harbour Pilot for almost 20 years and piloted hundreds of ships without incident

Born: Kirkcudbright, Scotland, 4 December 1879, to James and Janet Carson, nee Poole, and died in Watsons Bay in 1961

Spouse and Children: Married Jeanette Menzies (1880-1959) in Stockton, N.S.W., in November 1906; had children George Menzies (1907-1968, married Jean V. McGregor,

☛ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ☛

1938), James William Menzies (1911-1984, married Florence Jocelyn Cary, 1939) and Alexander Barron [known as Barron] (born in Newcastle, N.S.W., 10 January 1917; served as a Lieutenant with the 2/13 Australian Infantry Battalion from May 1940 to October 1945, No. NX14764; married Gwenyth Nielsen, 1944, died in Sydney, 1992)

Certificates of Competency: Master's Certificate for Foreign-Going Ships, No. 035586, issued Liverpool, England, 25 June 1904; Pilotage Exemption Certificate for Port Jackson, No. 4104, issued 4 May 1908; Pilotage Exemption Certificate for Newcastle, N.S.W., No. 9, issued 25 March 1913

Hearings: Stated *Tahiti's* speed was eight knots, though this was disputed by many witnesses. The exact speed was never established but his Pilot's Licence was nonetheless suspended for exceeding the speed limit. His licence was later reinstated and he finally retired in 1939; gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, at the Coronial Inquest, 3 and 6 February 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 30 and 31 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 647 and 649-694

Newspaper Reports: Pictures in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 and 17 November 1927

Note: Ironically, had it not been for the Public Schools' Amateur Athletic Association meeting on 3 November 1927, which delayed the return home of many city school children, his own sons would probably have also been aboard *Greycliffe*

CORBY, Fred Alexander

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Greaser

Note: Dived from the deck to rescue three of *Greycliffe's* passengers

Bravery Award: Silver Medal from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1928 for his rescue efforts

GIBSON, Frank William

Address: 129 Cargill Street, Dunedin, New Zealand

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Second Officer, had only been with the ship eight days

Note: Was in the stern of the ship, preparing it for sea, until after passing Garden Island. He then returned to his cabin, changed his coat, and went up to the bridge to attend to the flags

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, at the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927, and at the Admiralty Court, 31 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 92-97

HUDSON, Frederick Charles

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Carpenter

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, and the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 62-66

LITCHFIELD, Harold A.

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Third Officer

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, and the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 98-101

❧ *Tahiti's Crew* ❧

McLEOD, Roderick

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Quartermaster, at the helm during the accident

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, and at the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 68-71

McMURRICH, Laurence Keelan

Address: 172 Seatoum Road, Wellington, New Zealand

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Chief Engineer, with 21 years experience at sea, nine as Chief Engineer and two years with *Tahiti*

Certificate of Competency: First Class Engineer's Certificate of Competency

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, regarding the orders received from the bridge to increase or decrease speed, and the operation of the ship's boilers; gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927, and at the Admiralty Court, 25 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 87-91

SHARPE, Cecil

Address: 16 Newman Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand

Occupation: *Tahiti's* First Officer

Certificate of Competency: Master's Certificate of Competency

Note: In the forecastle when the accident occurred

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, at the Coronial Inquest, 16 November 1927, and at the Admiralty Court, 1 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 48-56

THOMPSON, Archibald

Address: 5 Buchana Street, Wadestirm, Wellington, New Zealand

Occupation: *Tahiti's* Second Engineer

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 28 December 1927, regarding the operation of the engine and orders received from the bridge, at the Coronial Inquest, 29 December 1927, and the Admiralty Court, 31 October and 5 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 102 and 697

Note: Was still *Tahiti's* Second Engineer when the vessel sank 460 miles south-west of Rarotonga on 18 August 1930; hailed as a hero at a banquet given for survivors and rescuers in Pago Pago four days later

List of Crew

Name	Position		
Aldwell B M	Master	Harsent W H	Greaser
Sharpe C	Chief Officer	Johnson C	Greaser
Gibson F W	Second Officer	Kidd G	Greaser
Litchfield H A	Third Officer	Sergef G	Greaser
Coote [?] G M	Fourth Officer	Belshaw A	Oil Burner
Ferguson F H	Purser	Forrest J	Oil Burner
Same R M	Assistant Purser	Franklin A	Oil Burner
Lester C	Surgeon	Gladding W	Oil Burner
Davidson F N	First Wireless Officer	Jordan A	Oil Burner
Gough E	Second Wireless Officer	Lark A W	Oil Burner
Marwick M	Third Wireless Officer	Miley T	Oil Burner
Hudson F	Carpenter	Rogers F	Oil Burner
Carrick M J	Boatswain	Wilson J	Oil Burner
Amy T R	Able Seaman	Frisk H	Wiper
Campbell J	Able Seaman	Gallagher J	Wiper
Chase C H	Able Seaman	Beckett C	Peggy
Gillies M	Able Seaman	McFadgen M M	Chief Steward
Horler A O	Able Seaman	Hutt W J	Second Steward
Johnston J	Able Seaman	Liney G H	Second Class Steward
MacDonald M	Able Seaman	Ashby ?	Third Class Steward
Maclean A	Able Seaman	Dickeson A	Head Waiter
Messenger R	Able Seaman	Shirely R	2nd Class Head Waiter
McInnes R	Able Seaman	Maxwell N	Saloon Stewardess
McLeod R	Able Seaman	Stewart B	Assistant Stewardess
Munn T	Able Seaman	Kingden N	Second Class Stewardess
Shorter F	Able Seaman	Watson C	Third Class Stewardess
Smith D	Able Seaman	Cole W	Barber
Harper L	Ordinary Seaman	Brown T W	Night Watch
Matheson S	Ordinary Seaman	Haime E	Night Watch
Cadegan R	Boy	Messenger C	Night Watch
Tallen S	Boy	Smith F	First Class Pantry
McMurrich L	Chief Engineer	Nutting A	Second Class Pantry
Thomson A	Second Engineer	Johnson F	Third Class Pantry
Larsen W	Third Engineer	Aiano H J	1st Class Assistant Steward
Moffat W J	Fourth Engineer	Baker A	1st Class Assistant Steward
Anstiss A M	Fifth Engineer	Barnsley H	1st Class Assistant Steward
Buchendahl V	Sixth Engineer	Bernstein J	1st Class Assistant Steward
Davies W J	Seventh Engineer	Boyle T	1st Class Assistant Steward
Hardy J S	Eighth Engineer	Clifford F	1st Class Assistant Steward
MacGibbon D	Ninth Engineer	Cobb R E	1st Class Assistant Steward
Brown W C	Electrician	Cole E R	1st Class Assistant Steward
Cole J	Greaser	Crockett G	1st Class Assistant Steward
Corby F A	Greaser	Finlayson T B	1st Class Assistant Steward
Edwards A	Greaser	Fletcher H	1st Class Assistant Steward

❧ Tahiti's Crew ❧

Name	Position		
Fulton R	1st Class Assistant Steward	Bourne A W	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Galton A H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Buckley F	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Gray J	1st Class Assistant Steward	Fewster J	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Henricks J	1st Class Assistant Steward	McMurtrie E	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Ilsley R	1st Class Assistant Steward	Peterson M	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Kennedy R	1st Class Assistant Steward	Picchi G	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Kent G W	1st Class Assistant Steward	Smith J	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Leader W A	1st Class Assistant Steward	Stratford A	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Marchant H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Tangiti R	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Martini G	1st Class Assistant Steward	Walker C	2nd Class Assistant Steward
Mess G H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Campbell J	Cadet
Miller D	1st Class Assistant Steward	Cave V	Cadet
Phipps H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Smith G	Cadet
Potts L F	1st Class Assistant Steward	Walker S	Cadet
Ramsey J	1st Class Assistant Steward	Johnson M	Chief Cook
Reed J	1st Class Assistant Steward	Davis W	Second Cook
Richards W	1st Class Assistant Steward	Pentland W	Extra Second Cook
Rountree G	1st Class Assistant Steward	Lahina ?	Third Cook
Rudd R W	1st Class Assistant Steward	Hickey W	Extra Third Cook
Scott H O	1st Class Assistant Steward	Pascoe T	Ships Cook
Sexton J D	1st Class Assistant Steward	Norman F	Assistant Ships Cook
Sinclair D E	1st Class Assistant Steward	Hedges R	Butcher
Sir W A	1st Class Assistant Steward	Coates J H	Second Butcher
Snelling J W	1st Class Assistant Steward	Phillips A	Assistant Butcher
Walker H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Robertson H	Baker
Walker W H	1st Class Assistant Steward	Wood E	Second Baker
Wilson D	1st Class Assistant Steward	Corrin J J	Assistant Baker
Wolpert R	1st Class Assistant Steward	Henderson R	Scullion
Bates A	2nd Class Assistant Steward	Shroul J	Scullion

Tahiti's first class passengers included the New Zealand Cricket Team returning home from England, including C. S. "Stewie" Dempster, J. E. Mills, R. C. Blunt, C C. R. Dacre, C. F. W. Allcott, M. L. Page, T. C. Lowry, H. M. McGirr, K. C. James, W. E. Merritt and M. Henderson. They are shown in this 1927 cigarette card. © Graeme Broxam Collection

Appendix V

❧ Tahiti's passengers ❧

This chapter contains the names, ages, countries of birth and destinations of the 194 passengers (107 First Class, 51 Second Class, and 36 Third Class) who departed Sydney on aboard *Tahiti* on 3 November 1927. It has been reproduced from *Tahiti's* original *List of Passengers*, dated Wellington, New Zealand, 7 November 1927.¹

First Class Passengers

<i>Name of Passenger</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Allcott	Mr C F W	22	British	Wellington
Bagshaw	Mr R A	47	British	Wellington
Bagshaw	Mrs R A	43	British	Wellington
Ballinger	Mrs W	52	British	Wellington
Barratt	Mrs E	43	British	San Francisco
Bartlett	Mrs L	52	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Blunt	Mr R C	26	British	Wellington
Boon	Mr T	53	British	Wellington
Boon	Mr T H R	40	British	Wellington
Boon	Mrs T R H [?]	39	British	Wellington
Bowen	Mr J M	23	British	Wellington
Boyce	Mr T J	48	British	Wellington
Brisco	Capt J L	42	British	Wellington
Brooksbank	Mr J S	40	British	Wellington
Brown	Mrs K M	48	British	Wellington
Canning	Miss E W	27	British	Wellington
Clark	Mr J F	25	British	San Francisco
Cooksley	Mr B	35	British	Wellington
Cunningham	Mr W H R	27	British	Wellington
Curry	Mrs G M	47	British	Wellington
Dacre	Mr C C	28	British	Wellington
Davidson	Mr A	46	British	Wellington
Dempster	Mr C S	23	British	Wellington
Doucet	Mr E	53	French	Wellington
Doughhead	Mr C R	27	British	Wellington
Edwards	Mrs E	52	British	Wellington
Ehstein	Mr S	37	Poland	San Francisco
Findlay	Mr J R	61	British	Wellington
Findlay	Mrs J R	56	British	Wellington
Flood	Mr E	23	British	Wellington
Gheyseus	Mr C	25	Belgian	Wellington
Gibson	Mr J	59	British	Wellington
Gifford	Mr F H	43	British	Wellington
Harddy	Mr A G	26	British	Wellington
Henderson	Mr M	32	British	Wellington

❧ *Tahiti's Passengers* ❧

<i>Name of Passenger</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Henderson	Mr W	56	British	Wellington
Henderson	Mrs W	56	British	Wellington
Henry	Mr H M	48	U.S.A.	Wellington
Hoggard	Mr D R	40	British	Wellington
Hoggard	Mrs D R	40	British	Wellington
Hoskins	Mr L B	43	British	Wellington
Hurley	Miss G	31	British	Wellington
Hurley	Miss K	28	British	Wellington
James	Mr K C	22	British	Wellington
Jamieson	Mr H C	65	British	Wellington
Johnston	Mr G L	52	British	Wellington
Joyes	Mr J	25	British	Wellington
Kay	Mrs W E	35	British	Wellington
Kay	Miss J E	36	British	Wellington
Kelly	Miss L M	38	British	Wellington
Lamb	Miss D M	23	British	Wellington
Le Cren	Mr D R J	58	British	Wellington
Le Cren	Mrs D R J	27	British	Wellington
Le Cren	Miss E	10 mths	British	Wellington
Leman	Mr M	30	Belgian	Wellington
Leslie	Mr W D	69	British	Wellington
Lewis	Mrs A M	54	British	Wellington
Lewis	Mrs P	50	British	Wellington
Lewis	Miss R	46	British	Wellington
Longmore	Mrs C L	48	British	Wellington
Lowry	Mr T C	29	British	Wellington
Magnus	Mrs G	50	British	Wellington
Marchbanks	Mr W S G	64	British	Wellington
Marchbanks	Mr G	26	British	Wellington
Matson	Mr J T	29	British	Wellington
Matson	Mrs J T	27	British	Wellington
McCarthy	Mr J	43	British	Wellington
McDougall	Mr M A	42	U.S.A.	Wellington
McGirr	Mr H M	35	British	Wellington
McGregor	Mrs E M	40	British	Wellington
Merritt	Mr W E	19	British	Wellington
Millen	Miss J A	29	British	Wellington
Mills	Mr J E	22	British	Wellington
Morgan	Miss E M	21	British	Wellington
Oliver	Mr C T	21	British	Wellington
Page	Mr J A	25	British	Wellington
Pankhurst	Mr R A	25	British	Wellington
Parker	Mr J A	37	British	Wellington
Phillips	Mrs H	38	British	Wellington
Redwood	Archbishop	88	British	Wellington
Salmond	Mr E	49	British	Wellington
Shaw	Miss L	25	British	San Francisco
Shirtcliffe	Miss J R	28	British	Wellington

❧ *Greycliffe - Stolen Lives* ❧

<i>Name of Passenger</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Smith	Miss N G	25	British	Wellington
Steger	Mr L	39	U.S.A.	Wellington
Stowe	Miss W	32	British	Wellington
Tate	Mr G H	47	British	Wellington
Tattersfield	Mr J W	51	British	Wellington
Tattersfield	Mrs J W	51	British	Wellington
Taylor	Mr J V	35	British	San Francisco
Thomas	Mrs C A	47	British	Wellington
Trevor	Mr A	49	British	Wellington
Trevor	Mrs A	47	British	Wellington
Vincent	Mr V	24	British	San Francisco
Vincent	Mrs V	23	British	San Francisco
Walker	Mr D	39	British	Wellington
Warren	Mr L	32	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Warren	Mrs L	25	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Warren	Miss	4	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Warren	Miss	3	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Williams	Miss E M	63	British	Wellington
Williams	Mrs J	38	British	Wellington
Windsor	Mr W H	50	British	Wellington
Winn	Mr W A	47	British	Wellington
Winn	Mrs W A	46	British	Wellington
Winn	Miss F	18	British	Wellington
Winn	Mr R C	40	British	Wellington

Second Class Passengers

Alward	Mr A W	38	British	Wellington
Aitcheson	Mr A	26	British	Wellington
Barrett	Miss L	41	British	Wellington
Black	Mrs M	57	British	Wellington
Bonaudi	Mr J	44	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Brennan	Mrs A	45	British	Wellington
Curtis	Miss V I	29	British	Wellington
Curtis	Miss A	29	British	Wellington
Cheyne	Miss M	54	British	Wellington
Devine	Mr W	64	British	Wellington
Devine	Mrs W	46	British	Wellington
Devine	Miss J F	25	British	Wellington
Gersin	Mrs R	50	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Gersin	Miss T D	24	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Goggin	Mr W W	70	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Hall	Mr Joe	20	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Johnson	Mr W J	36	British	Wellington
Johnson	Mrs R	74	British	Wellington
Johnson	Miss E	39	British	Wellington
Keith	Miss J	19	British	Wellington

❧ Tahiti's Passengers ❧

<i>Name of Passenger</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Lonigan	Mrs I	26	British	Wellington
Lowe	Mr J M	24	British	Wellington
Maskew	Mr T A	72	British	Wellington
Maskew	Mrs T A	64	British	Wellington
Medhurst	Dr I F	58	British	San Francisco
McKenzie	Mr G	23	British	San Francisco
Murphy	Mr S	43	British	San Francisco
Newman	Mr J	52	German	San Francisco
Newman	Mrs J	36	German	San Francisco
Newman	Master	2	German	San Francisco
O'Donnell	Mr J	60	British	Wellington
Pierce	Miss H	45	British	Wellington
Quay	Mrs J	38	British	Wellington
Quay	Miss S	15	British	Wellington
Quay	Master C	2	British	Wellington
Quay	Master D A	1	British	Wellington
Restraux	Mr A A	60	British	Wellington
Restraux	Mrs A A	58	British	Wellington
Restraux	Miss O	30	British	Wellington
Ryan	Mrs W	27	British	Wellington
Springer	Mr W	31	German	San Francisco
Springer	Mrs W	28	German	San Francisco
West	Mrs C G L	44	British	Wellington
West	Mr W	24	British	Wellington
Wester	Capt G	64	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Wester	Mrs G	54	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Wetherill	Mr W	29	British	Wellington
Wheatley	Mr L	31	British	Wellington
Wheatley	Mrs L	34	British	Wellington
Wheatley	Miss L	3	British	Wellington
Wilde	Mr D	27	British	Wellington

Third Class Passengers

Barlow	Mr Thos	52	British	San Francisco
Barlow	Mrs Thos	42	British	San Francisco
Barnes	Mr E J	21	British	Wellington
Bidois	Mr E	26	British	Wellington
Bowen	Mr T	41	British	San Francisco
Bowen	Master T	13	British	San Francisco
Christie	Mr J	65	British	Wellington
Cochrane	Mrs J	58	British	Wellington
Doyle	Mrs E	79	British	San Francisco
Fowler	Mr J	66	British	Wellington
Gideon	Mr E J	37	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Gideon	Mrs E J	30	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Gideon	Miss R	10	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Gideon	Miss H	8	U.S.A.	San Francisco

❧ *Greycliffe - Stolen Lives* ❧

<i>Name of Passenger</i>		<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Birth</i>	<i>Destination</i>
Gideon	Master J	2 mths	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Gray	Miss M E	22	British	Wellington
Hoare	Mr P J	28	British	Wellington
Hutchison	Mr J C	62	British	Wellington
Hyde	Mrs E G	48	British	Wellington
Johnson	Mr A	37	British	Wellington
Johnson	Mr R W	26	British	Wellington
Laughran	Mrs G	36	British	Wellington
Nie	Mr C H	38	British	San Francisco
Nie	Mrs C H	33	British	San Francisco
Nie	Miss B M	2	British	San Francisco
Nie	Miss R F	7 mths	British	San Francisco
Pritchard	Mr L O	37	British	Wellington
Pritchard	Miss E	47	British	Wellington
Pritchard	Miss K L	41	British	Wellington
Rawling	Mrs A C	31	British	Wellington
Robertson	Mr D	24	British	Wellington
Secombe	Mr A H	50	U.S.A.	San Francisco
Smith	Mr W D	32	British	Wellington
Smyth	Mr J	50	British	Wellington
White	Miss M	23	British	Wellington
Wright	Mr J	50	British	Wellington

A ferry departs Taronga Park Wharf in Athol Bight. On 3 November 1927, the ferry S.S. *Kurraba* had just departed the wharf for Circular Quay when the collision between *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe* occurred. Her Master, Captain Frederick Bagge, immediately turned her back and helped with the rescue.

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Appendix VI

❧ *First Hand and Professional Witnesses* ❧

Note: Addresses refer to those given in 1927-28

ALVAREZ, John Aspinall, 34

Address: Crescent Street, Hunters Hill

Occupation: Assistant Solicitor to the Sydney Harbour Trust

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 601

ANGUS, Sydney Charles, Captain

Address: New Zealand

Occupation: Navigating Officer of S.S. *Wanganui*, in port on 3 November 1927 at Darling Harbour's Berth 13; holder of a Master's Certificate, with twelve years at sea

Note: Witnessed the collision, aboard the ferry S.S. *Kurraba* returning from Taronga Zoo

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 448-452

BAGGE, Frederick F., Captain, 64

Address: 64 Fitzroy Street, Milson's Point

Occupation: Master of the ferry S.S. *Kurraba*

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and River Master's Certificate, No. 378, issued N.S.W., 16 March 1885

Note: Underway from Taronga Park Wharf to Circular Quay. When *Kurraba* was about three minutes out from Taronga Park, he heard cries and turned to see *Greycliffe* with her bow in the air

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, and at the Coronial Inquest; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 484-485

BAKER, Frank

Address: 43 Alexandra Street, Drummoyne

Occupation: Ships Draftsman at Garden Island; served eight years at the Royal Dockyard, Portsmouth, and nine years at the Admiralty Experiment Tank; under contract with the Commonwealth Government until 1921

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest on 28 January 1928, regarding the resistance of propulsion of ships, in particular indicating the probable movements of *Tahiti*; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 489-510

BARRY, John Fabian, 20

Address: 29 Livingstone Road, Lidcombe

Occupation: Able Seaman Gunner, Royal Australian Navy, based on H.M.A.S. *Success*; joined the Royal Australian Navy 26 May 1925 and served during World War II; discharged 9 November 1945 as a Petty Officer with H.M.A.S. *Kanimbla*, No. 16520

Born: Queanbeyan, N.S.W., 19 November 1906; married Mary E. Sconce, 1927

Note: Saw the accident occur from Garden Island

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 18-19 January 1928, regarding the speed of *Tahiti* when passing Garden Island; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 307-310 and 315-319

BLAKENEY, Leslie Hindmarsh, Captain, 37

Address: 'Terlingah', Parraween Street, Cremorne

Occupation: Master of the tug S.S. *Bimbi*

Note: Was at Garden Island and, seeing the accident occur, took *Bimbi* straight to the scene where he picked up twelve survivors and one body

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 20 January 1928, that he had observed *Tahiti* passing Garden Island at an unusually fast speed, which he estimated to be twelve knots; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 335-342 and 345-360

BLUNT, Roger Charles

Address: Dunedin, New Zealand

Occupation: Salesman and member of the Dominion Cricket team [the whole team was on board]

Note: Passenger on *Tahiti*, returning home to New Zealand; observed the collision from the vessel's boat deck

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court on 22 October 1929

BOWDEN, Lionel Frederick

Occupation: Coxswain of the naval workboat *Sapphire*

Note: Was proceeding from Garden Island aboard *Sapphire* to transfer crew to the Naval Auxiliary *Kurumba* when the accident occurred and diverted to the site; rescued twelve survivors from the water

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927

BRADLEY, Herbert

Occupation: Foreman Sailmaker at Garden Island for twelve years

Note: On the wharf at Garden Island; turned at the sound of blasts of a ship's horn and screams, to see *Tahiti* about to strike *Greycliffe*, then watched the accident occur

Newspaper Report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court on 1 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 437-442

✎ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ✎

BROWN, Eric Herbert, 50

Occupation: Tram Driver, underway from Taronga Park Wharf to Balmoral

Note: Witnessed the accident from his driver's seat around one minute after leaving the wharf

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, regarding *Tahiti's* speed, and later at the Coronial Inquest; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 435-436

BRYANT, William Gregory, 28

Address: 25 Newcastle Street, Five Dock

Occupation: Chief Petty Officer, Torpedo Coxswain, Royal Australian Navy, based on the destroyer H.M.A.S. *Success*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 17-19 January 1928, that he had observed *Tahiti* passing Garden Island at the speed of twelve knots; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 272-306 and 313-314

CANNON, William Thomas

Occupation: Diver engaged in salvage operations; took over after work was completed by the Harbour Trust

Note: First dived on the wreck on 14 November 1927; found and recovered the bodies of Edwin Conner and Eugen Wolff

CANTWELL, James Burnett, 33

Address: Wonga Street, Canterbury

Occupation: Signalman at South Head Signal Lookout Station, employed by the Navigation Department

Born: Kirkdale, England, 7 July 1894, married to Margaretta [maiden name?]

Note: On duty with Signal Master Alf Gibson at the time of the accident; did not see the accident occur, but saw the immediate aftermath when he looked out the window to the harbour at an exclamation from Gibson

Newspaper Report: A photo of Gibson at the Signal Station appeared in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 443-447

CARR, Thomas W.

Address: 5 Cecily Street, Lilyfield

Occupation: Harbour Trust diver

Note: Retrieved many of *Greycliffe's* victims from the wreck and brought them to the surface

Newspaper Reports: Story of the diver's experiences reported in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; photographs in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 and 7 November 1927

CHAPLIN, William Robert, Captain, 39

Occupation: Master of S.S. *Jervis Bay* (Australian Commonwealth Line) for five years; the vessel was larger than the *Tahiti* but considered to be of similar design and speed; Master Mariner with 24 years at sea, including ten years as Master

☛ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ☛

Born: London, 4 February 1888

Certificates of Competency: Master's Certificate No. 694, issued N.S.W., 14 February 1913; Pilotage Exemption Certificate for Port Jackson, No. 3207, issued N.S.W., 12 May 1914, but nonetheless always used a pilot

Note: Stated he had run down the harbour many times with Watsons Bay-bound ferries without incident, very often having run parallel with them and also passed them at times; had had all the Sydney pilots on board his ship at some stage, including Captain Carson, of whom he said was 'a very able and reliable pilot'.¹

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 26 January 1928, appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 427-434

CLARK, Geoffrey Reginald, Captain, 44

Address: 103 Falcon Street, Crows Nest

Occupation: Master of the Manly ferry S.S. *Burra-Bra* ; Master Mariner, had been at sea some 30 years, of which eight years were with the Manly Ferry Company, and three years aboard *Burra-Bra*

Born: Croydon, England, 15 March 1883

Certificate of Competency: Master of Foreign-Going Ship, Certificate No. 634, issued N.S.W., 3 December 1909

Note: Noticed nothing unusual about *Tahiti's* speed; saw *Greycliffe* alter her course in the direction of *Tahiti* and had the impression *Greycliffe's* Master had not realised *Tahiti* was on her rear left side

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 13 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 24 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 180-197

CODY, Herbert Bede, 31

Address: Stanley Street, Randwick

Occupation: Customs Officer, officially 'Boarding Officer' at Number Five Wharf, Darling Harbour; had been with Customs seven years, including twelve months in his current position

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court, 24 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 469-471

COMBER, Charles Amos

Address: 33 Renny Street, Paddington

Occupation: Signalman at the Signal Station on Garden Island; had spent thirteen years at Garden Island, and previously fifteen years as a Signalman in the Royal Navy

Note: Stated he never saw *Greycliffe*, but had observed *Tahiti* pass Garden Island at an estimated twelve knots. Only later did he receive a telephone call at the Signal Station from a Naval Police Constable informing him of the accident

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 28 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 22 October 1929, in which he attested to the speed he observed *Tahiti* passing Garden Island; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 481-483

✿ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ✿

COMYNS, Alfred

Address: Resident of 389 Canning Street, North Carlton, Melbourne, but staying at 'Nanamula', Bridge End, Wollstonecraft

Occupation: Retired Natal Police detective

Note: Passenger aboard *Woollahra* travelling from Watsons Bay to Circular Quay

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927, and at the Coronial Inquest, 9 November 1927, in which he attested that *Greycliffe* made a turn to port; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 12-15

COOKE, William Ernest

Occupation: Professor of Astronomy at Sydney University and State Astronomer for N.S.W. until 1927

Note: Witnessed the accident from Taronga Park Wharf

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 486-488

CRUIKSHANK, Hugh Daley

Occupation: Assistant Traffic Manager at Sydney Ferries Ltd.

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, in which he explained how ferry masters were required to make reports if ferries were running late and, further, that he had never received any reports concerning problems with *Greycliffe's* steering gear

DAVIS, Percy Albert, 59

Address: 44 Louisa Road, Birchgrove

Occupation: Tugboat proprietor and lighterman, Master of the tug *Bonny Bell*

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and River Master's Certificate No. 430, issued N.S.W., 30 August 1888

Note: Aboard *Bonny Bell* towing a lighter to Manly at the time of the accident and considered *Tahiti's* speed to be twelve to thirteen knots when crossing Circular Quay

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 23 January 1928, appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 389-391

DAY, George Frederick, 48

Occupation: Police Constable with the Water Police

Note: Aboard the Police Launch *Cambria*; one of the first to attend the accident on 3 November 1927, and helped rescue many passengers

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 10 January 1928, appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 122-124

Bravery Award: Bronze Medal from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1928 for his rescue efforts

DRAKE, David Thomas, 45

Address: Bathurst Road, Springwood

Occupation: Director of the shipbuilding company David Drake Ltd. of Bald Rock, Balmain

❧ *Greycliffe* - Stolen Lives ❧

Note: His late father, David Drake senior, was *Greycliffe*'s builder, but Drake jnr. personally superintended her construction in 1911; stated that no structural alterations had been made to the ferry since construction

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 24 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 1 November 1929; statement of evidence given at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 397-407

ELLIOTT, Ethelbert, 37

Address: Belmont Street, Sutherland

Occupation: Clerk in the Torpedo Office at Garden Island

Note: Saw *Tahiti* pass Garden Island but did not actually witness the accident; later saw debris from *Greycliffe* in the water

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry where he did not want to estimate *Tahiti*'s speed; was mocked by the public gallery and Dr. Brissenden, KC, who was in turn reprimanded by Judge Campbell, and withdrew a sarcastic comment; gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, and later at the Admiralty Court, 24 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 458-462

FRASER, Alexander

Address: 88 Macpherson Street, Waverley; residing in Sydney six-and-a-half years

Occupation: Shipwright and Assistant Surveyor Superintendent to the Union Steamship Company; previously a surveyor for Lloyds in Glasgow and surveyor to the British Corporation, with about 30 years experience in ship construction and repairs

Note: Inspected the bow of *Tahiti* on the afternoon of the accident and observed scratches on the frames at the 23 foot mark

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court, 4 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 602-615

GALJAARD, Adrian Samuel

Address: 161 Bay Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria

Occupation: Cook, Royal Australian Navy, assigned to H.M.A.S. *Success*

Note: Standing on the pontoon at Garden Island and later attested he had observed *Tahiti* passing *Greycliffe* at twelve to thirteen knots

Hearings: Gave evidence in the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927, in which he stated he observed neither *Greycliffe* nor *Tahiti* change course; gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 21 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 366-373

GIBSON, David Wilson

Occupation: Marine Surveyor; Master Mariner with eighteen years experience

Note: Examined portions of *Greycliffe*'s wreck and estimated the angle of impact to have been between 65 and 70 degrees

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 29 December 1927, and later also at the Coronial Inquest

✎ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ✎

GREENLEES, Alexander McPhee

Occupation: Naval Architect with several years experience in Britain and the Commonwealth

Note: Examined portions of *Greycliffe's* wreck and estimated the angle of impact to have been between 80 and 90 degrees

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 29 December 1927

HALLIDAY, Malcolm, Captain, 63

Address: 8 Turner Avenue, Haberfield

Occupation: State Navigation Department's Chief Shipwright Surveyor

Certificate of Competency: Pilotage Exemption Certificate No. 2519, issued N.S.W., 6 January 1903

Note: Conducted a survey of *Greycliffe*, including her steering gear, from 1-4 June 1927, five months before the accident, and concluded everything was in good order

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 16 November 1927, at the Coronial Inquest, 11 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 4 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 156-168

HALLIWELL, Walter D. S., 43

Address: 4 Springfield Road, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancashire, England

Occupation: Petty Officer, Royal Australian Navy, based on the destroyer H.M.A.S. *Success*

Born: Oldham, England, 31 August 1884; joined the Royal Australian Navy 5 October 1925, served during World War II, discharged 1 July 1946 as a Chief Petty Officer with H.M.A.S. *Cerberus*, No. 15042

Note: Was standing on the pontoon at Garden Island and observed *Tahiti* passing Garden Island at a speed of eight-and-a-half to nine knots, before increasing to about twelve knots

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 20 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929, in respect to the converging courses of the two vessels; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 320-334

HARRIS, William Henry

Address: 64 Balfour Road, Rose Bay

Occupation: Sydney Harbour Trust diver for 22 years, but had been diving for 28 years

Note: Brought many of *Greycliffe's* victims to the surface during the first week following the accident; described the dives and recovery of victims as '...the worst experience that had befallen him in his 25 years of underwater work'²

Newspaper Reports: Story of the diver's experiences appeared in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927; photographs in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 and 7 November 1927

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 24 January 1928, appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 393-396

HART, George Edwin Patrick, 32

Address: Austin Street, Lane Cove

Occupation: Licensed Surveyor and Government Surveyor for the Sydney Harbour Trust

☛ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ☛

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 9 January 1928, regarding the measurement of distances between certain points in the harbour and the site of the accident; gave evidence at the Admiralty Court, 22 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 104-108, 312, and 453-455

HEAD, Norman, 24

Address: 76 Lane Cove Road, North Ryde

Occupation: Photographer employed by *Sun Newspapers Ltd.*

Note: Took photographs of *Tahiti's* bow after the collision

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 457

HENNESSEY, John

Address: 247 Underwood Street, Paddington

Occupation: Senior Constable of the Dockyard Police at Garden Island, where he had been stationed for twelve years

Note: On duty at the ferry wharf at Garden Island on the afternoon of the accident

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 21 January 1928, that *Tahiti* was extremely close to the pontoon and passed at high speed; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 361-365

HILDEBRAND, Cevvers Perry, Captain

Address: 'Glenrock', Glenview Road, Hunters Hill

Occupation: Acting Harbour Master, otherwise Assistant Harbour Master for Port Jackson; Master Mariner for over twenty years, but a total of some 47 years at sea

Born: Galway, Ireland, 6 November 186[?]; married to Ellen Mary

Certificates of Competency: Master of Foreign-Going Ship, Certificate No. 406, issued N.S.W., 4 May 1894; Pilotage Exemption Certificate, No. 1774, issued N.S.W., 6 September 1890; Marine Surveyors Certificate, No. 67, issued N.S.W., 6 June 1905

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 9, 10 and 13 January 1928, regarding navigation and speed regulations; statements of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appear in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 112-119, 125-130, and 513-516

HUGHES, Charles Henry Morris

Occupation: Manager of the Union Steamship Company in Sydney

Note: Oversaw *Tahiti's* departure from Wharf No. 5 in Darling Harbour on 3 November 1927; after the accident did not personally go out to *Tahiti* and instead sent Engineer Superintendent Mr Gilles, Marine Superintendent Captain Walton and Repair Superintendent Mr Campbell

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 27 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 31 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 472-480 and 511-512

HUNTINGDON, Charles, Captain, 43

Address: 49 Dickson Avenue, Gore Hill

Occupation: Master of the ferry S.S. *Kummulla*

Born: Cheshire, England, 3 June 1884

✿ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ✿

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and Rivers Master's Certificate, No. 1162, issued N.S.W., 18 July 1913

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 and 28 November 1927, and later at the Coronial Inquest

HYNDE, James, Senior Constable

Address: Thompson Street, Gladesville

Occupation: Senior Constable in the Naval Dockyard Police on Garden Island for thirteen years

Note: On duty on Garden Island ferry wharf at the time of the accident; saw *Greycliffe* but did not actually see the accident occur. When informed, he called the Signal Station at Garden Island requesting immediate assistance; several statements he made to the Coronial Inquest contradicted statements which he had previously made before the Court of Marine Enquiry

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court, 23 October 1929, where his evidence was again criticised; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 463-468

JAMES, Stanley George, 24

Occupation: Resident Medical Officer at Sydney Hospital

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest regarding the condition of Elsie Ramsay and the treatment he gave her before she died in the evening of 3 November 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 10

KAY, Robert

Occupation: Caretaker of the Naval Sportsground at Rose Bay, otherwise a civil employee of the Navy Depot

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 30 December 1927, regarding his witnessing of rudder problems on *Greycliffe* three weeks prior to the collision

KIDD, James William, 51

Occupation: Engineering and Works Manager for Sydney Ferries

Certificates of Competency: First Class Engineer's Certificate No. 268, issued N.S.W., 20 June 1902; Second Class Engineer's Certificate No. 33, issued N.S.W., 8 November 1900

Hearing: Gave evidence regarding *Greycliffe's* rudder at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 30 December 1927

KING, Tom

Occupation: Leading Stoker, Royal Australian Navy, based at H.M.A.S. *Penguin*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 18 November 1927 that *Tahiti*, not *Greycliffe*, changed course; this conflicted with the evidence given by other witnesses

KIRKHAM, Joseph

Address: 128 George Street, Marrickville

Occupation: Chief Yeoman of Signals with the Royal Australian Navy at Garden Island

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 18 January 1928, that he had observed *Tahiti* passing Garden Island at the speed of twelve knots, and at the Admiralty Court,

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23 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 263-271

LAVELLE, Anthony

Occupation: Detective Sergeant with the Water Police

Hearing: Gave evidence regarding the death of Florence Robinson at the Coronial Inquest, 7 February 1928, which appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 695

LIPPIATT, John

Address: 153 Stanmore Road, Stanmore

Occupation: Carpenter

Note: Witnessed the accident from the ferry S.S. *Kurraba*, travelling from Taronga Park to Circular Quay; considered *Tahiti* to be doing the normal speed for that part of the Harbour

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 21 November 1927, at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court, 1 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 384-388

LUCAS, Lancelot Edgecombe, Captain, 56

Address: 2 Little [sic] Avenue; Balmain, lived some years in Hopetoun Avenue, Vacluse

Occupation: Chief Examiner of Masters and Mates Certificates for the N.S.W. Department of Navigation; former Sydney Pilot who had served with *Captain Cook*

Born: Bristol, England, 26 November 1871

Certificates of Competency: Master of a Foreign-Going Ship, Certificate No. 485, issued N.S.W., 20 July 1900; Extra Master of a Foreign-Going Ship, Certificate No. 608, issued N.S.W., 20 March 1908; Pilotage Exemption Certificate for Port Jackson, No. 2483, issued N.S.W., 29 April 1902; Marine Surveyor Certificate, No. 85, issued N.S.W., 24 March 1908

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 21 November 1927 regarding the distances between various points in the Harbour in relation to the accident and movement of the two vessels

Note: Fainted while in the witness stand and removed from the court semi-conscious

LUDEKE, Francis, 58

Address: 30 Dunmore Street, Bexley

Occupation: Superintendent of the Watsons Bay service of Sydney Ferries

Certificate of Competency: Third Class Engineer's Certificate, No. 961, issued N.S.W., 5 September 1890

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 30 December 1927 regarding a rudder pin breaking on *Greycliffe* in August 1927

MacDONALD, Robert

Address: 'Kildona', Lyons Road, Five Dock

Occupation: Engineer on the ferry S.S. *Burra-Bra* for six years

Note: Observed *Tahiti* ahead of *Burra-Bra* as they rounded Bennelong Point; went below to bring her up to her cruising speed of thirteen-and-a-half knots then came up on deck again when the ferry was abreast of Fort Denison. Finding they had gained on *Tahiti*, he

🦋 First Hand and Professional Witnesses 🦋

decided it was safe enough to increase her speed to fourteen knots. The ferry had just reached the speed when the order came for 'full astern', and a whistle blew to lower her boats. It was 4.29 p.m. and 30 seconds by the engine room clock

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927, at the Coronial Inquest, 14 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 24 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 198-213

MacMAHON, Edward Gerard, 23

Occupation: Resident Medical Officer at Sydney Hospital

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest regarding the condition of Martha Williams, and the treatment he gave her before her condition worsened and she died in the evening of 3 November 1927; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 11

MAGUIRE, Ernest Norbert

Occupation: Police Constable with the Water Police

Note: Aboard Police Launch *Cambria*; one of the first to attend the accident on 3 November 1927, helped rescue many passengers

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 10 January 1928; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 109-111

Bravery Award: Bronze Medal from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1928 for his rescue efforts

MEIKLE, Edgar Volance

Address: 10 Iredale Avenue, Cremorne

Occupation: Second Engineer of the Pilot Vessel, *Captain Cook*; had twenty years' seafaring experience, over two years with *Captain Cook*

Note: Was on the aft deck of *Captain Cook*, which was at her moorings in Watsons Bay at the time of the accident, and saw the collision occur; hurried to tell Captain Allan, who was also sitting on the foredeck; did not consider *Tahiti* to be travelling any faster than usual

Newspaper Report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 25 January 1928

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 24 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 1 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 408-417

MORRIS, James Edward, Captain, JP, 60

Address: 'Cleadow', The Crescent, Vaucluse

Occupation: Superintendent of the N.S.W. State Navigation Department

Born: South Shields, County Durham, England, 11 August 1867

Certificates of Competency: Pilotage Exemption Certificate No. 2205, issued N.S.W., 4 January 1896; Marine Surveyor Certificate, No. 78, issued N.S.W., 5 February 1907

MORISSET, Vaux Liddiard

Address: 'Arizona', Challis Avenue, Potts Point

Occupation: Insurance Broker

Note: On the roof of the Pomeroy building at Potts Point from where he saw the accident occur; estimated *Greycliffe* to be doing nine knots and *Tahiti* eleven knots; stated he saw *Greycliffe* alter her course to port

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Coronial Inquest and at the Admiralty Court, 31 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 418-426

NICHOLLS, William Richard

Occupation: Newsagent of 137 Parramatta Road, Annandale

Note: Identified the bodies of Ruby and Donald Crook, and of Florence Frost, who were friends from Victoria, staying with him at the time; there is a discrepancy in the evidence Nicholls gave at the Coronial Inquest. He clearly identified Donald John Crook as Ruby's husband and not as her son, as was the case [or could this be an error in the official reports?]. Her husband, John ('Jack') Thomas Francis Crook, was at home in Elsternwick; it was their son, 2-year-old Donald John Crook, who died with Ruby on *Greycliffe*

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, page 19

NIXON, Rupert C.C.W., 35

Address: Burrawong Avenue, Mosman

Occupation: Helmsman of the ferry S.S. *Burra-Bra* for six years

Note: Underway from Circular Quay towards Manly at the time of the accident, a short distance behind *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe*; as they were both in front of him, he saw the collision occur

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927, at the Coronial Enquiry, 14 January 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 24 October 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Enquiry appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 214-229

NORTON, Henry E.

Note: Passenger on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry

Newspaper Report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927

PALMER, Arthur Aubrey, Dr., 56

Address: 32 Prince Albert Street, Mosman

Occupation: Government Medical Officer

Note: Identified the bodies and determined the causes of death for Alfred Barker, Charles Bloom, Millicent Bryant, Mabel Carroll, Elizabeth Coombes, Mary and Noreen Corby, Donald and Ruby Crook, Robert Forbes, Florence Frost, Margery Giraud, Agnes Hill, Leonard Lankshear, Betty Laurence, William Paradice, Florence Purnell, Charles Reid, William Renton, Alfred Stevens, Henry Stiles, Mary Terry, Henry Thompson, James Treadgold, and Reginald Wright

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 4-6

PETERSON, Peter Robert, 26

Address: 35A Dalgety Road, Millers Point

Occupation: Coal Lumper

Note: Passenger on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*

❧ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ❧

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry and Coronial Inquest, 12 January 1928, regarding *Tahiti*'s speed; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 169-179

Bravery Award: Bronze Medal and Certificate of Merit from the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in September 1929 for diving into the harbour and rescuing an unidentified twelve year-old girl

Newspaper Reports: Bravery award mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 10 September 1929, page 12, and 1 October 1929, page 16

PICKSLEY, Arthur

Occupation: Retired Merchant

Note: Passenger aboard the ferry S.S. *Burra-Bra*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry on 18 November 1927

PICOT, Thomas Harrison

Address: 'St. Heliers', Fitzwilliam Road, Vacluse

Occupation: Salesman

Note: Passenger on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*, sitting in the smoking cabin

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry

Newspaper Report: Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927

ROGERS, Vivian Bruce, 38

Address: 58 Muston Street, Mosman

Occupation: Amateur Photographer and Journalist

Note: Witnessed the accident from Taronga Park, as a passenger on the tram; ran from the ferry to the tram in order to get the front window seat on the seaward side (i.e. the right hand side of the tram) and was intending to take a photo of *Tahiti* from the window as she was heading out; considered *Tahiti* was travelling at 'great speed', but also felt that *Greycliffe* had altered her course

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, at the Coronial Inquest, and at the Admiralty Court, 1 November 1929; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 374-383

SHAKESPEARE, William, Sergeant, 53

Address: 138 Newland Street, Waverley

Occupation: First Class Police Sergeant, based at the Sydney Water Police Station; joined the Police Force in 1900; death on 24 May 1928 not related to the *Tahiti-Greycliffe* accident

Certificate of Competency: Harbour and River Master, Certificate No. 876, issued N.S.W., 19 March 1904

Note: Aboard Police Launch *Cambria*; one of the first to attend the accident on 3 November 1927; recovered several survivors and bodies from the harbour

Newspaper Report: Front page picture printed in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 7, 8 and 45

Bravery Award: Posthumously commended by the Royal Shipwreck Relief and Humane Society of N.S.W. in August 1928 for his rescue efforts

SILVA, William James, Captain, 65

Address: 4 Parsley Road, Vaucluse

Occupation: Master of the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*

Certificate of Competency: Harbour & Rivers Master's Certificate, No. 564, issued N.S.W., 25 October 1892

Note: Estimated *Tahiti* to have been travelling at a great speed; heard two whistles when astern of *Tahiti* and turned to see the ferry run down

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, that he had just passed *Tahiti* and *Greycliffe* when the accident occurred; underway in the opposite direction from Nielsen Park to Garden Island; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest, 17 January 1928, appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 231-247

SNELSON, Gilbert

Occupation: Able Seaman, Royal Australian Navy, based on the destroyer H.M.A.S. *Success*

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927, regarding the speed and course of the two vessels; gave evidence at the Admiralty Court, 28 October 1929 (by then no longer with the Navy)

STEVENSON, Thomas

Occupation: Assistant Secretary to the Vaucluse and Nielsen Park Trust

Note: Passenger on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*

Newspaper Report: Gave accounts to the *Sydney Morning Herald* about the rescue of victims

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Admiralty Court, 31 October 1929

STRINGER, John Robert, Captain, 56

Address: Brierley Street, Mosman

Occupation: Harbour Master in Sydney, a position he had held for three years; previously Assistant Harbour Master for six years

Born: Hull, England, 28 November 1871

Hearing: Statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 590-600

THOMPSON, John Augustus

Address: 17 Kymore Flats, Phillip Street, Sydney

Occupation: British Marine Expert and Naval Architect, with 27 years experience in shipbuilding, ship repair and marine engineering

Note: Member of the Institute of Naval Architects, London; Member of the Institute of Marine Engineering, London; Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineering, London; Naval Architect Assessor to the Board of Trade, London; Chief Designer of Merchant Craft for the British Admiralty during World War I; was one of a panel of six persons which reviewed evidence in the *Titanic* enquiry in 1912

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, at the Coronial Inquest, 1-2 February 1928, and at the Admiralty Court, 28-30 October and 7 November 1929, regarding the so-called 'Bow Theory'; this widely publicised theory of the effect of the bow wave of a larger vessel upon a smaller vessel in close proximity was dismissed in all three courts; very critical of evidence given by *Tahiti's* Engineer, Pilot, and Master; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 518-588 and 697

✿ First Hand and Professional Witnesses ✿

WEATHERBURN, Edward Francis, 20

Address: 33 Harris Street, Pyrmont

Occupation: Deckhand on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra* for one year

Born: Sydney, N.S.W., 7 February 1907; married Ena [maiden name?]; served as a Private in the Australian Army (2/13 Batt., 7 Div.) during World War II, 1940-1945

Hearings: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 23 November 1927, that he estimated *Tahiti* to have been travelling at a great speed, and at the Coronial Inquest, 18 January 1928; statement of evidence at the Coronial Inquest appears in SRNSW 2/10498, pages 255-262

WHITEHOUSE, Francis

Occupation: Special Service Officer with the Fire Board, ex-Seaman

Note: Passenger on the ferry S.S. *Woollahra*, underway from Nielsen Park to Circular Quay, on the return leg of the same route as *Greycliffe*

Hearing: Gave evidence at the Court of Marine Enquiry, 18 November 1927

WINSTON, Charles E., Dr. M.B. Ch.M.

Occupation: Medical Superintendent of Sydney Hospital

Note: Directed proceedings in the hospital on the night of the accident

Looking south-west from above The Gap across Watsons Bay, Parsley Bay, Vaucluse, and Nielsen Park, with Bradleys Head and the city in the background. Note the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* heading out from Watsons Bay. © National Library of Australia

Appendix VII

❧ The Court of Marine Enquiry ❧

Sitting 9 November 1927 - 7 January 1928

BRISSENDEN, E. M., Dr, KC

Role: Barrister

Representing: The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.

Newspaper: Caricature in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 January 1928

BURDEKIN, B., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

CAMPBELL, James Lang, The Honourable Justice, KC, 69

Address: 'Caradon', Albert Street, Woollahra

Role: N.S.W. Supreme Court Judge, 1922-29, presided over the Court of Marine Enquiry

Career: Admitted to the Bar in August 1886, commissioned KC in 1910, and appointed Judge of the N.S.W. Supreme Court in August 1922; appointment to the Supreme Court criticised by many because of his age; infamous for his complicated and twisted statements

Born: Lochgilphead, Argyllshire, Scotland, on 28 November 1858; came to Australia with his parents in 1865 and married Laura Augusta Georgina ('Lily') Gadsden in 1885 (no issue); retired in May 1929 and died in Woollahra on 7 December 1936

Note: Forced to retire in embarrassing circumstances in May 1929 after a birth certificate was obtained from Scotland, which proved he had reached the mandatory retirement age of 70 years; Campbell had claimed he was two years younger

Newspaper: Picture in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 17 November 1927; caricature in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 January 1928

EVANS, F. P., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Ebsworth and Ebsworth Solicitors

Representing: *Tahiti's Pilot*, Thomas Carson

HOLMAN, W. A., Mr, KC

Role: Barrister; Counsel for the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor

Representing: The Director of Navigation

Newspaper: Caricature in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 January 1928

HOOTON, J. R., Mr

Role: Barrister

Representing: The Director of Navigation

❧ Personalities of the Courts ❧

HOWELL, William Thomas, Captain

Role: Assessor, assisting Judge Campbell

Note: Resigned after less than one week due to a conflict of interest

JOLLIFFE, Frank Wilfred, Captain

Role: Assessor, assisting Judge Campbell

Note: Appointed after the resignation Captain William Howell

LINDBERGH, C. Z., Captain

Role: Assessor, assisting Judge Campbell

MANNING, H. E., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

Newspaper: Caricatures in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 and 5 January 1928

MOORS, M. C., Mr

Role: Barrister

Representing: The State of N.S.W. and Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners

NIELD, J. R., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Creagh and Creagh, Solicitors

Representing: The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.

SHERIDAN, J. P. G., Mr

Role: Barrister

Representing: The State of N.S.W. and Sydney Harbour Trust Commissioners

Appendix VIII

❧ *The Coronial Inquest* ❧

Sitting 9 November 1927 - 7 February 1928

BERNE, F. W., Mr

Representing: The N.S.W. Police Force

BRISSENDEN, E. M., Dr, KC

Role: Barrister

Representing: The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.

Newspaper: Caricature in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 January 1928

BURDEKIN, B., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

CREAGH, William J., Mr

Role: Solicitor, of Creagh and Creagh Solicitors

Representing: The Union Steamship Company and Master and Officers of *Tahiti*

EVANS, F. P., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Ebsworth and Ebsworth Solicitors

Representing: *Tahiti's* Pilot, Thomas Carson

FLETCHER, Harry Ferdinand William, 60

Role: Coroner for the City of Sydney; presided over the Coronial Inquest

Born: N.S.W., 1867, to Edward and Emma Hamilton Fletcher, nee Smith, (married 1866), the oldest child four children; followed by siblings Jessie E. (born 1869), Edward Louis (born 1876), and George Stratford, (born 1879)

Spouse and Children: Married Edith M. Dowling in 1893 (born N.S.W., 1871, to George T. and Martha J. Dowling); had children Harry O. (born 1894, married Elizabeth C. Quirk, 1920), Daphne M. (born 1898, married Gerald D. Henderson, 1924), and Eileen E. (born 1902, married Roy M. Pegler, 1928)

MANNING, H. E., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

Newspaper: Caricatures in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 and 5 January 1928

NIELD, J. R., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Creagh and Creagh, Solicitors

Representing: The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.

PALMER, B., Captain

Occupation: Shipping Inspector

Representing: The State Navigation Department

WILKINSON, Clive Bowman, 34

Role: Solicitor of Abbott, Tout, Creer and Co. Solicitors

Representing: The family of Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander Paradise

Note: Brother-in-law of Surgeon Lieutenant-Commander Paradise; married his sister Dorothy in 1926

Appendix IX

❧ The Admiralty Court ❧

Sitting 11 - 13 April 1928 and 22 October - 20 November 1929

BRISSENDEN, E. M., Dr, KC

Role: Barrister; instructed by Creagh and Creagh Solicitors

Representing: The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.

Newspaper: Caricature in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 January 1928

BURDEKIN, B., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

EVANS, F. P., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Creagh and Creagh Solicitors

Representing: *Tahiti's* Pilot, Thomas Carson

MANNING, H. E., Mr

Role: Barrister, instructed by Norton Smith & Co.

Representing: Sydney Ferries Ltd. and the Master and crew of *Greycliffe*

Newspaper: Caricatures in the *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 and 5 January 1928

ROGERS, Percival Halse, The Honourable Justice, KC, (later Sir), 44

Address: "Katheer", Etham Avenue, Darling Point

Roll: N.S.W. Supreme Court Judge, 1928-45; presided over the Admiralty Court

Career: Educated at Newington College, then obtained a B.A. at Sydney University in 1905; became New South Wales' second Rhodes Scholar in 1905 (the first was ex-Prime Minister Sir Edmund Barton's son Wilfred), and obtained a BCL at Worcester College, Oxford, in 1908; admitted to the Bar in March 1911, commissioned KC in 1926, and appointed Judge of the N.S.W. Supreme Court in June 1928; became Deputy Chancellor of Sydney University in 1934, and Chancellor in 1936; appointed Knight of the British Empire (KBE) in 1939

Born: Gunnedah, N.S.W., 1 August 1883, the son of a Methodist Clergyman; married Mabel Mary Trevor Jones, a professional golfer, in Randwick, N.S.W., on 22 December 1911, and died unexpectedly of a heart attack on 7 October 1945

Appendix X

❧ Individual Actions for Compensation ❧

Between 1928 and 1930, at least 46 suits were brought against the Union Steamship Company, totalling some £120,000. A further 34, totalling almost £80,000, were also brought against Sydney Ferries Ltd. Details of many of these are listed within this appendix, in alphabetical order of Plaintiff. The original documents are held by State Records N.S.W. amongst the N.S.W. Supreme Court's 'Process Papers'.

Plaintiff	Mary Barker
Defendant	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No.	6368 / 1928
Claim	£5,000
Decision	11 December 1930
Verdict	£750 plus £42 6s costs
Apportioned	£450 for widow and £150 per child
Dependants	Joan and Judith Barker
Restriction	Children's portions held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
Note	Interest from trust account to be paid to Mary Barker for the education and maintenance of Joan and Judith
Plaintiff	Mary Barker
Defendant	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No.	6369 / 1928
Claim	£5,000
Note	Discontinued 12 December 1930
Plaintiff	Eric John Barrett
Defendant	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No.	6204 / 1929
Claim	£3,000
Plaintiff	Charles Bayes Barrowcliff on behalf of James B. Barrowcliff, minor
Defendant	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No.	1141 / 1928
Claim	£500
Decision	15 January 1931
Verdict	£50 plus £14 7s costs
Plaintiff	Charles Bayes Barrowcliff on behalf of James B. Barrowcliff, minor
Defendant	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No.	6491 / 1928
Claim	£500
Plaintiff	Jessie Adam Bloom
Defendant	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No.	6430 / 1928
Claim	£3,000
Decision	4 November 1930
Verdict	£950 plus £25 11s costs
Apportioned	£500 for widow and £450 for child
Dependant	Phillip Arthur George Bloom

❧ Individual Actions for Compensation ❧

<i>Restriction</i>	Child's portion held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Note</i>	Jessie Bloom's income in 1930 was £7 1s per week including £1 7s 6d per week widow's pension; interest from trust account to be paid to Jessie Bloom for the education and maintenance of Phillip
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Jessie Adam Bloom
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6431 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Francis Harold Brook on behalf of Leslie Francis Brook, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	1346 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Decision</i>	10 December 1930
<i>Verdict</i>	£50 plus £15 8s costs
<i>Note</i>	Claim for damages based on mental shock, expenses incurred for two holidays necessitated through shock, the loss of one year's schooling, damage to clothing, valued at £6, and the loss of books, valued at £1
<i>Plaintiff</i>	George Edward Bryant on behalf of Bowen A. B. Bryant, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6479 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	George Edward Bryant on behalf of Bowen A. B. Bryant, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6480 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	May Victoria Alice Carroll
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6439 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	May Victoria Alice Carroll
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6438 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Hubert Henry Carroll
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6472 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 November 1930
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Hubert Henry Carroll
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6471 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 November 1930
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Eleanor Eliza Conner
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6433 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 20 October 1931

<i>Plaintiff</i>	Eleanor Eliza Conner
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6432 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 November 1930
<i>Plaintiff</i>	William Harrower Coombes
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	3790 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,500
<i>Plaintiff</i>	John Christian Corby
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5729 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Arthur Ernest Cornford
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6559 / 1929
<i>Claim</i>	£75
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Arthur Ernest Cornford
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6558 / 1929
<i>Claim</i>	£75
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Alfred Norman Dean
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	8651 / 1930
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Alfred Norman Dean
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	8652 / 1930
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Mabel Victoria Garrett
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6435 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Decision</i>	4 November 1930
<i>Verdict</i>	£950 plus £25 11s costs
<i>Apportioned</i>	£700 for widow and £250 for child
<i>Dependant</i>	Doris May Garrett
<i>Restriction</i>	Child's portion held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Note</i>	Mabel Garrett's declared income, in 1930, for the previous three years, was 24s per week plus £1 10s per week superannuation; Doris was also earning 3s per day as a typist; interest from trust account to be paid to Mabel Garrett for the maintenance of Doris
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Mabel Victoria Garrett
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6434 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Victoria Alexandra Hedges
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand

❧ Individual Actions for Compensation ❧

Process No. 2741 / 1928
Decision 15 December 1930
Verdict £1,100 plus £38 costs
Apportioned £500 for widow and £300 per child
Dependants Two, unnamed
Restriction Children's portions held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
Note Interest from trust account to be paid to Victoria Hedges for the education and maintenance of the children

Plaintiff **Samuel Hill on behalf of Dora Hill, minor**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 6732 / 1929
Claim £250

Plaintiff **Samuel Hill on behalf of Dora Hill, minor**
Defendant Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No. 6733 / 1929
Claim £250

Plaintiff **Benjamin George Jones**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 1055 / 1928
Claim £1,500

Plaintiff **Claude Jones**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 6261 / 1928
Claim £500

Plaintiff **Claude Jones**
Defendant Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No. 6260 / 1928
Claim £500

Plaintiff **Frederick Edgar Jones**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 6557 / 1929
Claim £50

Plaintiff **Molly Jones**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 6262 / 1928
Claim £300

Plaintiff **Molly Jones**
Defendant Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No. 6263 / 1928
Claim £300

Plaintiff **Estate of William Jones (Executrix Gertrude Withers)**
Defendant The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
Process No. 6348 / 1928
Claim £2,500

Plaintiff **Estate of William Jones (Executrix Gertrude Withers)**
Defendant Sydney Ferries Ltd.
Process No. 6349 / 1928
Claim £2,500

Plaintiff	Paul Landers
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6362 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£200
Plaintiff	Paul Landers
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6363 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£200
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 20 October 1930
Plaintiff	Charles Joseph Lankshear
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6469 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£250
Plaintiff	Charles Joseph Lankshear
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6468 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£250
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 November 1930
Plaintiff	Ada Lee-Brown
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	113 and 6289 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
Plaintiff	Ada Lee-Brown
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6246 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
Plaintiff	Jessie O'Brien on behalf of Sheila O'Brien, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6493 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£500
Plaintiff	Jessie O'Brien on behalf of Sheila O'Brien, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6492 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£500
Plaintiff	Kate Carlyle Paradise
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5834 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£20,000
<i>Decision</i>	4 June 1931
<i>Verdict</i>	£2,750 plus £52 10s costs
<i>Apportioned</i>	£1,750 for widow and £500 per child
<i>Dependants</i>	William John Houston Paradise and Jacqueline Houston Paradise
<i>Restriction</i>	Children's portions held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Note</i>	Kate Paradise's income in 1930 was 7s 11d per week widow's pension plus 2s 11d per week and child; interest from trust account to be paid to Kate Paradise for the education and maintenance of the children
Plaintiff	Isabella Ragg
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand

❧ Individual Actions for Compensation ❧

<i>Process No.</i>	6291 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Isabella Ragg
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6292 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Albert James Ramsay
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6505 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Albert James Ramsay
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6504 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Alice Maud Rees
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6341 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Alice Maud Rees
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6340 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Elsie Mary Reid
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5915 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£8,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Elsie Mary Reid
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6355 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£8,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Maud Renton
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	834 and 6353 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Decision</i>	4 November 1930
<i>Verdict</i>	£750 plus £23 8s costs
<i>Apportioned</i>	£600 for widow and £150 for Edwin (i.e. 4/5 and 1/5)
<i>Dependants</i>	An unnamed son, Georgina Iris S., and Edwin Charles Renton
<i>Restriction</i>	Child's portion held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Note</i>	Adult children had no claim as dependents, therefore compensation awarded only to widow and minor aged son; interest from trust account to be paid to Maud Renton for the maintenance of Edwin
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Maud Renton
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6354 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 28 October 1930

❧ *Greycliffe - Stolen Lives* ❧

<i>Plaintiff</i>	Mary Ann Stevens
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6437 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 August 1931
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Mary Ann Stevens
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6436 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 12 November 1930
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Harold Mark Stewart on behalf of Letty Laird Stewart, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6870 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£750
<i>Decision</i>	7 January 1931
<i>Verdict</i>	£50 plus £6 costs
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Harold Mark Stewart on behalf of Letty Laird Stewart, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6871 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£750
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Rebecca Stewart
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6942 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Rebecca Stewart
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6943 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Robert Stewart
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5995 / 1929
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Robert Stewart
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6085 / 1929
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Note</i>	Discontinued 14 November 1930
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Amy Stiles
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6036 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Amy Stiles
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6035 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£5,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Robert Christopher Terry and others
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6407 / 1928

❧ Individual Actions for Compensation ❧

<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Robert Christopher Terry and others
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6406 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Estate of Henry Thomas Thompson (Executrix Florence P. Thompson)
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6186 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Decision</i>	20 November 1930
<i>Verdict</i>	£500 plus £22 10s costs
<i>Dependant</i>	Florence Patricia Thompson
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Estate of Henry Thomas Thompson (Executrix Florence P. Thompson)
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6185 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Albert Edward Towner on behalf of Nancy Towner, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	1140 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,500
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Albert Edward Towner on behalf of Nancy Towner, minor
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6490 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,500
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Cecil Hodgeman Tyree
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5704 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£1,000
<i>Note</i>	Claim for damages based on expenses incurred in nursing his wife Daisy [below], for transportation and domestic help; discontinued 11 February 1931
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Daisy May Tyree
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5705 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Note</i>	Claim for damages based on injuries, nervous shock, loss of money and personal belongings, and damage to clothing; discontinued 11 February 1931
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Christopher Williams
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6409 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Christopher Williams
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6408 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£3,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Louise Vera Wolff
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	5999 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£10,000

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

<i>Decision</i>	10 September 1931
<i>Verdict</i>	£900 plus £50 costs
<i>Apportioned</i>	£850 for widow and £50 for child
<i>Dependant</i>	Herbert Eugen Wolff
<i>Restriction</i>	Child's portion held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Louise Vera Wolff
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6000 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£2,000
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Jessie Alice Wright
<i>Defendant</i>	The Union Steamship Company of New Zealand
<i>Process No.</i>	6249 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£7,500
<i>Decision</i>	4 November 1930
<i>Verdict</i>	£1,000 plus £25 11s costs
<i>Apportioned</i>	£500 for widow and £250 per child
<i>Dependants</i>	Marjorie Joan and John Reginald Wright
<i>Restriction</i>	Children's portions held in a trust account until reaching the age of 21
<i>Note</i>	Jessie Wright's income in 1930 was £285 <i>per annum</i> , including £156 <i>per annum</i> superannuation and £64 <i>per annum</i> interest; the estate was valued at £1,050; interest from trust account to be paid to Jessie Wright for the education and maintenance of Marjorie and John
<i>Plaintiff</i>	Jessie Alice Wright
<i>Defendant</i>	Sydney Ferries Ltd.
<i>Process No.</i>	6248 / 1928
<i>Claim</i>	£7,500

Appendix XI

☛ *Greycliffe and Tahiti: Vital Statistics* ☛

S.S. Greycliffe

<i>Official Number</i>	131478
<i>Port of Registry</i>	Sydney
<i>Registration Folio</i>	No. 8 of 1911 (20 March)
<i>Type</i>	Wooden double-ended twin-screw screw steamship (ferry), copper fastened
<i>Tonnage</i>	132.92 tons gross, 90.39 tons net register
<i>Dimensions</i>	Length 125.0 ft. (38m), beam 24.0 ft. (7.3m), depth of hold 9. 9ft. (3.0m), height from bottom of keel to top of deck 10.7ft. (3.3m)
<i>Constructed</i>	Sydney, N.S.W., 1911
<i>Builder</i>	David Drake (Sr.), Balmain, N.S.W.
<i>Architect</i>	Walter Reeks
<i>Engine</i>	Triple-expansion steam, cylinders 11, 18 and 32in. diameter by 31in. stroke, 49 nominal horse power, 350 indicated horse power
<i>Engine Makers</i>	Campbell & Calderwood of Paisley, Scotland (in 1910)
<i>Maximum Speed</i>	12 knots at 130rpm
<i>Boiler</i>	Water tube, coal fired, pressure 225 pounds per square inch
<i>Boiler Makers</i>	Babcock and Wilcox Ltd., London (in 1910).
<i>Machinery (auxiliary)</i>	Wildridge and Sinclair
<i>Lifesaving Equipment</i>	Several rafts positioned both fore and aft, approximately 6ft. x 3ft.; one life boat
<i>Owner</i>	Sydney Ferries Limited
<i>Service</i>	Harbour passenger ferry
<i>Entered Service</i>	Following sea trials in March 1911
<i>Crew</i>	4 – Master, Engineer, Fireman and Deckhand
<i>Passenger Capacity</i>	592
<i>Former Owner</i>	Watson's Bay and South Shore Steam Ferry Company Ltd., sold 29 September 1920 to final owners
<i>Fate</i>	Register closed 20 December 1927 with comment "Vessel damaged beyond repair and sunk in Sydney Harbour on 3 November 1927 as the result of a collision with the S.S. <i>Tahiti</i> . Advice received from owner, certificate of registry received and cancelled." Following the collision at about 4.28 p.m., the vessel had sunk mid-Harbour between Clarke Island and Bradley's Head with the loss of 40 lives, an unknown number of survivors being rescued by several nearby vessels.

S.S. *Tahiti*

<i>Official Number</i>	117715 / VTWG
<i>Port of Registry</i>	London, England
<i>Type</i>	Steel twin-screw steam ship
<i>Tonnage</i>	7585 tons gross, 4155 tons net register
<i>Dimensions</i>	Length 460ft. (140.2m), beam 55.5ft (16.7m), depth of hold 24.4ft. (7.4m)
<i>Constructed</i>	Glasgow, Scotland, 1904
<i>Builder</i> (hull & machinery)	A. Stephen and Sons Ltd., Glasgow (also makers of the engines and boilers)
<i>Engines</i>	2 x triple-expansion steam, each 3-cylinders, diameters 30, 50 and 80in., total 1442 nominal horse power, each coupled to one of the twin screws
<i>Boilers</i>	3 double-ended and 3 single-ended, oil fired, working pressure 189 pounds per square inch
<i>Maximum Speed</i>	16 knots
<i>Other Particulars</i>	Wireless, electric light, Lloyd's 100A1
<i>Owner</i>	Union Steamship Company of New Zealand Ltd.
<i>Service</i>	Passenger and mail service between Sydney, Wellington and San Francisco
<i>Crew</i>	149 all ranks
<i>Passenger Capacity</i>	277 first class, 97 second class, and 141 third class passengers
<i>Former Name</i>	<i>Port Kingston</i>
<i>Former Owners</i>	Imperial Direct West India Mail Service Co. Ltd. (1904-08), Elder Dempster & Co. (1908-11), sold to the Union Steamship Company in 1911 and renamed R.M.S. <i>Tahiti</i>
<i>Other Service</i>	Requisitioned by the New Zealand Government in 1914, refitted and redesignated <i>Troopship No. 4</i> ; departed New Zealand with troops for Egypt on her first tour of duty in October 1914; returned to the Union Steamship Company in July 1919 and sent to Vancouver for a refit; resumed regular passenger and mail service in April 1920
<i>Incidents</i>	September 1916: attacked by a submarine, but torpedo narrowly missed; February 1917: used her stern gun to defend herself from an attack by a surfaced German submarine in the English Channel; April 1921: fire in number one hold; November 1927: collided with the ferry <i>Greycliffe</i> in Sydney Harbour, killing forty; July 1929: hull damaged by a coral reef in Papeete Harbour; July 1930: door stove in and rudder key knocked out during a storm; August 1930: Lost as below:
<i>Fate</i>	Sank 4.42 p.m. on 18 August 1930, ca. 460 miles southwest of Rarotonga, after a propeller freed itself from the shaft and tore a hole in her hull.

❧ Notes and References ❧

Preface

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 November 1927

The School Boat

1. Fort Macquarie was built at Bennelong Point in 1819 to protect Sydney from possible attack. When it was demolished and replaced with a tram depot in 1903, which resembled a fort, and the name was maintained
2. Barnes later used this term to describe the result of what he felt was a slackness in the chains to the steering gear. See also *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1929
3. *Greycliffe's* Deckhand Fred Jones' statement to the Coronial Enquiry, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, State Records NSW 2/10498, pages 131-144
4. *Greycliffe's* Fireman Alfred Dean's statement to the Coronial Enquiry, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498, pages 145-155
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

The Mail Steamer

1. *Tahiti's* 2nd Officer Frank Gibson's statement to the Coronial Enquiry, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498, pages 92-97

The Collision

1. Newspapers of the time reported widely that the boys were 'mucking around' together, which is repeated in 'modern' accounts of the tragedy. One of these boys, survivor Ken Horler, refutes this. School children segregated themselves into four distinct groups – boys, girls, public schools and private schools – and never mixed. They sat with their own group of friends and behaved themselves. In fact, there were Prefects on board who would report them if they did misbehave.
2. *He went down with the Greycliffe*, *People Magazine*, 25 February 1953
3. Master of the tug *Bimbi*, Leslie H. Blakeney's, statement before the Coronial Inquest on 19 January 1928, as quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 20 January 1928
4. *He went down with the Greycliffe*, *People magazine*, 25 February 1953
5. John Corby's statement before the Coronial Enquiry, 15 November 1927, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498, page 17
6. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927, statement of Able Seaman Richards, R.A.N.
7. *He went down with the Greycliffe*, *People magazine*, 25 February 1953
8. Interview with Ken Horler, 15 December 2001
9. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927
10. Ibid.
11. *He went down with the Greycliffe*, *People magazine*, 25 February 1953
12. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927
13. *North West Champion*, Moree, 10 November 1927
14. Log Book of the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* (2), 3 November 1927, SRNSW X195
15. *North West Champion*, 7 November 1927
16. Interview with Ken Horler, 15 December 2001
17. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927

❧ Greycliffe - Stolen Lives ❧

18. Fort Macquarie Tram Depot was later demolished; the Sydney Opera House now stands on the site
19. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927
20. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927
21. Log Book of the Pilot Steamer *Captain Cook* (2), 3 November 1927, SRNSW X195
22. It was later clarified that his 'special leave' was in fact accrued annual leave, which he was told to take. Upon expiry of the time owing him, he was instructed to take a further six weeks leave, which was deducted from his long service leave

The Cost

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927
2. *The Bulletin*, 10 November 1927
3. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927
4. Ibid.
5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927
6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927
7. Ibid.
8. *The Record*, The Magazine of the Boys' High School, Sydney, Vol. XIX, No. 2, December 1927
9. Ibid.
10. *Sydney Mail*, 9 November 1927
11. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 1927
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. *North West Champion*, 7 November 1927
17. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1927
18. Quoted from a letter in the possession of Ian de Lisle Hammond, and reproduced with his kind permission
19. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 November 1927
20. Bernard Landers' gravestone epitaph at South Head Cemetery
21. Letter from Paul Landers to 'The Official in Charge, City Morgue, Sydney', dated 18 November 1927, Papers Relating to Marine Enquiries, SRNSW 2/10547
22. H.M.S. *Renown* had visited Sydney only a few months previously, when the vessel brought the Duke and Duchess of York to Australia for the opening of Parliament House in Canberra
23. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1927
24. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1927
25. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927
26. "Tahiti"-*"Greycliffe"* Collision, Letter to the Sydney Harbour Trust from Sydney Ferries Ltd., dated 29 November 1927, Papers Relating to Marine Enquiries, SRNSW 2/10547

State versus Commonwealth Jurisdiction

1. *Navigation Act 1901*, Section 23, State of New South Wales
2. *The Solicitor-General's Opinion*, undated, Naval Archives Branch, National Archives of Australia, MP1587/1, 160R
3. Ibid.

The Court of Marine Enquiry

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1927
2. Ibid.

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3. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1927
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November 1927
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1927
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 November 1927
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. David Drake senior was considered one of Sydney's shipbuilding pioneers when he died in August 1922, aged 84. In his obituary, the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated he was 'one who was regarded as having been responsible for the launching of more vessels than any other man in New South Wales'. Born in Scotland in 1838, he apprenticed as a shipbuilder under his father, and then came to Australia in 1861. Within five years, he had established his own shipbuilding company on the Manning River. Finally settling his company at Bald Rock, Balmain, he built several coastal vessels and ferry steamers, including *Bunya Bunya*, *Cammeray*, *Greycliffe* and *Kangaroo*
24. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 17 November 1927
25. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 December 1927
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 January 1928
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 January 1928
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 1928
39. Ibid.
40. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 January 1928
41. *Court of Marine Enquiry*, No. 36, Commonwealth of Australia, 14 January 1928
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Article 24 of the Port of Sydney Regulations related to the rule that overtaking vessels must keep clear of the vessel being overtaken

47. Article 43 of the Port of Sydney Regulations (1925) related to the speeds allowed by vessels other than ferries between Goat Island and Fort Denison (six knots) and between Fort Denison and a line extending from Bradley's Head and Shark Island lighthouse (eight knots)

The Coronial Inquest

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 November 1927
2. Ibid.
3. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 November 1927
4. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December 1927
5. Ibid.
6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1928
7. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 January 1928
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 January 1928
9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1928
10. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1928
11. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 January 1928
12. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 February 1928
13. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1928
14. *Inquisition before Coroner Sitting Alone, 7 February 1928*, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

The Bow Theory

1. RMS *Olympic* collided with British warship H.M.S. *Hawk* in Southampton on 20 September 1911, whilst under the command of a pilot
2. Extract from *Sydney newspaper (no name or date given) forwarded by D.D. under cover weekly Report dated 21.12.29*, Naval Archives Branch, National Archives of Australia, Series MP1587/1, Item 160R
3. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 28 November 1927
4. Ibid.
5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 December 1927
6. Ibid.
7. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 January 1928
8. *Court of Marine Enquiry*, No. 36, Commonwealth of Australia, 14 January 1928
9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1928
10. Ibid
11. Ibid.
12. *Inquisition before Coroner Sitting Alone, 7 February 1928*, Coroner's Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498
13. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1929
14. *The State Reports, New South Wales, 1930*, Volume 30, 1931, *Sydney Ferries v. S.S. Tahiti*. Extracts have been reproduced with the express permission of © The Lawbook Co, part of Thomson Legal & Regulatory Limited.
15. Ibid.

The Admiralty Judgement

1. *The State Reports, New South Wales, 1928*, Volume 28, 1928, *Sydney Ferries v. S.S. Tahiti*, pages 307-313. Extracts have been reproduced with the express permission of © The Lawbook Co, part of Thomson Legal & Regulatory Limited.

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2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 October 1929
3. Ibid.
4. *The State Reports, New South Wales, 1928*, Volume 28, 1928, *Sydney Ferries v. S.S. Tahiti*, pages 367-368. Extracts have been reproduced with the express permission of © The Lawbook Co, part of Thomson Legal & Regulatory Limited.
5. Ibid., page 368
6. Ibid., page 369
7. Extract from *Sydney newspaper (no name or date given) forwarded by D.D. under cover weekly Report dated 21.12.29*, Naval Archives Branch, National Archives of Australia, Series MP1587/1, Item 160R
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 1930; Letter to the Editor written by Fred Phillips of Port Stephens, N.S.W., dated 22 September 1930
9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 October 1931
10. Ibid.

Conclusion

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March 1931
2. In 1927, ferries on Sydney Harbour carried almost 51,472,000 passengers. Ferry services were controlled by two companies, which owned together 68 vessels. Sixty-six of these were double ended screw steamers and the remaining two were motor driven. (Commonwealth of Australia Official Year Book, 1928)
3. By 1931, eleven fewer ferries serviced Sydney Harbour and passenger figures had fallen some 5,256,000, or by over ten percent. (Commonwealth of Australia Official Year Book, 1931)
4. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 1931
5. Ibid.
6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 August 1933
7. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 1928
9. Ibid.
10. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 November 1927
11. *Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1891-1939, Volume 7, A – CH*, Melbourne University Press, 1979, General Editors Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Searle, page 550, Campbell, James Lang
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.

The Loss of Tahiti, 1930

1. Due to time zones, Sydney was two hours behind; therefore it was 5.00 a.m. at *Tahiti's* location
2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 August 1930
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1930
6. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 August 1930

Greycliffe's Passengers – The Victims

1. Interview with Ken Horler, 15 December 2001
2. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 November 1927
3. *Treadgold Tracery*, Ruth Tinsley, 1993, reproduced with her kind permission

4. Ibid.

Greycliffe's Passengers – The Survivors

1. Interview with Ken Horler, 15 December 2001
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

Greycliffe's Crew

1. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 4 November 1927

Tahiti's Crew

1. *List of Crew, S.S. Tahiti*, 7 November 1927, Archives New Zealand/Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aetearoa, Head Office, Wellington, Archives Reference SS 1/572 No.92

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1. *List of Passengers, S.S. Tahiti*, 7 November 1927, Archives New Zealand/Te Whare Tohu Tuhituhinga O Aetearoa, Head Office, Wellington, Archives Reference SS 1/572 No.92

First Hand and Professional Witnesses

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1928
2. *Daily Telegraph News Pictorial*, 5 November 1927

❧ Further Reading ❧

Inquest No. 240 of 1928, SRNSW 2/10498

Statements given by witnesses during the enquiry, Formal Evidence of Identification, Coroner's Medical Reports upon the examination of the bodies of victims [quite detailed, needs discretion], Papers concerning missing pieces of evidence in 1929-30, ca. 700 pages

Register of Bodies Received, SRNSW 3/2233

Coronial Records giving details of the deceased – name, age, place of birth, occupation, when and where found, date of removal from morgue to which undertaker, details of the person identifying the body, property in deceased's possession when found, sometimes further details on personal characteristics (for the purpose of identification), and when / to whom personal belongings were handed over

Registers of External Examinations of Bodies, SRNSW 7/1460

Coronial records detailing name, age, place of birth and occupation of the deceased, dates and results of examination [needs some discretion]

J. L. Campbell, J. Notebooks, Court of Marine Enquiry 1927-28, SRNSW 7/9895

P. Halse-Rogers, J. Notebooks, Admiralty 1929-44, and Causes 1928-44, SRNSW 3/2353

Notes taken by the two judges during the Court of Marine Enquiry and Admiralty Court, including individual claims for compensation in Halse-Rogers' Causes 1928-44

These documents are held by:

State Records N.S.W.
Western Sydney Research Room
43 O'Connell Street
Kingswood, N.S.W.
Australia

Tel. 02-9673-1788
Fax. 02-9833-4518
E-mail: srecords@records.nsw.gov.au
Website:
<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au>

Analysis of Evidence, ML MSS.4900

W. H. Gregory, Barrister, Papers of Mr. B. Burdekin, an analysis of evidence given by the witnesses at the Coronial Inquest, ca. 50 pages

Cross Analyses of Evidence Taken at the Marine Court of Coroners Inquiry, ML MSS.4900

W. H. Gregory, Barrister, Papers of Mr. B. Burdekin, a cross analysis of evidence given by witnesses at the Coronial Inquest, ca. 100 pages

These documents are held by:

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Australia

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Fax. 02-9273-1255
E-mail: web@slnsw.gov.au
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Page numbers in *italics* indicate the reference is a picture

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<i>Antinous</i>	steamer, freighter, 89, 90
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The last moments of the *Tahiti*, from a contemporary wire image press photograph.
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A contemporary wire image press photograph of the *Tahiti's* bows following the *Grey-cliffe* collision, clearly showing the minor denting and scrape marks left by the smaller vessel.

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